Chinese International Students' Participation in the Oracy Demands of British Higher Education

Julian Liu 刘掬涟

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Abstract

Recent figures have shown that Chinese students constitute the vast majority of international student enrolments in British higher education, a trend which has not only contributed to the UK higher education system significantly in financial terms, but also made it more linguistically and culturally diverse. Under a dominant constructivist approach to pedagogy, oral interactions between lecturer/tutor and students and among students have been given high importance. However, social constructivism has neglected the potential influence that "hard" or "soft" disciplines may have on pedagogic interactions. While there have been many studies on Chinese international students' participation in academic preparation or language-related courses, there is a paucity of studies on these students' performance of the oracy demands (lecturers'/tutors' expectations of students' listening and speaking) across different disciplines in UK higher education.

This study is informed by critical realism and Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse. Three courses with a high proportion of Chinese international students were selected then observed: Course A represents a "soft" social science discipline, whereas Course B drew from an applied "hard" science discipline. Course C was a compulsory course in workplace communication skills that was required for Course B's discipline. This study provides a rich investigation of the pedagogic design and enactment of these three courses, with particular focus on how the students, especially Chinese international students, participated in the oracy demands of each class.

In designing this research study, I adopted the layered ontology of critical realism. Ethnographically informed observations allowed me to record and investigate interactions at the "empirical" level of classroom discourse. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the two observed lecturers/tutors and 14 students (11 Chinese international students, one international student and two domestic students). Stimulated recall interviews were also used with the lecturer interviews in order to elicit their explanations of particular moments or practices from their courses. Thematic analysis of lecturers'/tutors' and students' accounts reported in the interviews enabled me to understand the "actual" level of classroom discourse in terms of the reasons behind their performances. The deep "real"

of the classroom discourse were potential causes of students' performance. These causes were conceptualised through the theory of "knowledge structures", "pedagogic discourse" and "models of teacher and student" (Bernstein, 2000).

Knowledge conditions such as the students' preparation before class or students' level of knowledge, linguistic challenges and cultural scripts could all affect Chinese international students' verbal engagement in class. These interwoven factors informed the students' model of the teacher and learner (Bernstein, 2000) and thus wrestled with the lecturers' oracy expectations of student talk. This study also found that disciplinary differences can affect pedagogy and should be taken into consideration while studying students' performance of oracy demands. For "hard" sciences, especially for those disciplines that rely heavily on mathematics, oracy with respect to constructing knowledge might have to accommodate the mathematical language in order to build up the disciplinary knowledge. The example of Course C demonstrated that, given the demands of labour market and students' career paths, "hard applied" disciplines might incorporate a course on communication skills and team-work, whereby oracy is the pedagogic product, not just the pedagogic process. Effective strategies for assistance such as scaffolding questions, the use of humour, explicit teaching of expectations were provided by the observed lecturers/tutors to encourage participation or help students to think. Concerns of humility and the avoidance of losing face (Ellwood and Nakane, 2009) were still reported among the interviewed Chinese international students. However, it was found that over time Chinese international students could be adaptable when they encountered a new pedagogic culture. At the same time, this research reveals that the ancient Chinese philosophy of "Wu" influences Chinese international students' expectations of what a good learner should be and do in the classroom. These different models of teacher and student interactions which are affected by "Wu", humility and avoidance of losing face seem to be in sharp contrast to Vygotsky's social constructivist learning theory and offer new insights into whether generic social constructivism applies equally to all disciplines and to students from different cultures.

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Author’s Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Printed name: Julian LIU 刘掬涟

Signature:

Abbreviations

EAL	English as Additional Language
EAP	English for Academic Purpose
ELF	English as a Lingua Franca
ESL	English as Second Language
EU	European Union
GBCET	Great Britain-China Educational Trust
HE	Higher Education
HEPI	Higher Education Policy Insitute
HESA	The Higher Education Statistics Agency
ICEF	International Consultants for Education and Fairs
ID	Instructional Discourse
L 1	English as First Language
L 2	English as Second Language
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PMI	Prime Minister's Initiative
RD	Regulative Discourse
STEM	Science Technology Engineering and mathematics
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Language
UK	United Kingdom
UKCISA	UK Council for International Student Affairs
US	United State
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

Chapter 1 Introduction

Globalisation in higher education

Universities are key participants in the surge of economic globalisation that has swept the world in the last three decades. The number of students choosing to study at universities overseas has increased rapidly, from an estimated 1.3 million in 1990 to 5 million in 2017 (ICEF Monitor, 2017). English typically serves as the lingua franca of an increasingly globalised world and major English-speaking destinations, including the US, the UK, Australia and Canada, host the majority of mobile students. More broadly, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Japan and the United Kingdom receive more than 50% of all international students worldwide, and OECD countries attract 73% of all students enrolled abroad (ICEF Monitor, 2015). The UK is currently the second most popular destination for international students after the US, attracting a substantial number of overseas students every year. In 2014-15, the 437,000 international students (both EU and non-EU) studying in the UK made up 19% of all students registered at UK universities (Universities UK, 2017). Noticeably, the UK has the highest proportion of international enrolments in its total higher education recruitment. While 6% of students in higher education in OECD countries are international students, over a fifth (21.1%) of students in the UK are international. This is more than in any other major country, with Australia following closely at 20.7%, 8% in Germany and 5% in the US (Griffith, 2017).

By 2017, the international student profile in UK higher education was extremely diverse and there were 430,833 international students from over 200 countries and territories enrolled in tertiary education in the UK (ICEF Monitor, 2017). The recent Tier 4 Student Visa figures show that the intake of international students has grown by 10% since 2016, with Chinese nationals representing the majority and India, Pakistan and Bangladesh showing the largest gains. In 2017, one in five students in UK higher education was Chinese (Universities UK International, 2018). The UK, as the main host country in Europe, provides an advanced English-medium tertiary education system, which increases compatibility and comparability across national education systems and has removed barriers to student exchanges, supporting the global market for advanced skills. It is predicted that the rapid

expansion of English-medium degree programmes at both the undergraduate and post-graduate levels will keep attracting international students (ICEF Monitor, 2017).

Significant financial and cultural benefits for UK

Universities are well placed to benefit from a profit-making educational market. According to Kaplan International Pathways, in recent decades, the UK has been phenomenally successful in recruiting international students, second only to the US (Higher Education Policy Insitute, 2018). Nick Hillman, Director of HEPI (Higher Education Policy Insitute) points out that the economic benefits that international students bring to the UK were ten times more than the costs of hosting them (Higher Education Policy Insitute, 2018). The net impact of hosting international students in the UK is £20.3 billion (British Council, 2017). Every year, it is shown that the gross benefits (including tuition fees, other spending and knock-on economic effects) of hosting international students amount to £22.6 billion, while the net impact (benefits minus costs) totals £20.3 billion. Statistics from the British Council also confirms that international students bring economic benefits to regions throughout the country (British Council, 2017) .

As a result, regional jobs and local businesses are boosted. It has been shown that in 2014-15, international students' consumption supported 206,600 jobs throughout the UK. Specifically, along with their tuition fee payments, international students spend money off-campus on a wide range of goods, services and activities, all of which were estimated to total £5.4 billion in 2014–15. The transport and retail sectors in particular are significant beneficiaries of international students' expenditure. The UK transport and retail industries can attribute £750 million and £690 million in profits respectively to international students' off-campus consumption (Universities UK, 2017). Moreover, expenditure at hotels, restaurants and resorts spent by international students' relatives coming to visit also makes a significant contribution to the economy. Taking together their university payments, off-campus spending and the spending of their visitors, in 2014-15, international students in UK generated £25.8 billion in gross output (Universities UK, 2017). The intense economic activity and employment sustained by international students' off-campus spending generated £1 billion in tax revenue. All these figures demonstrate that international students make enormous economic contributions in every region of the UK. Occupying the

second-largest share of the global market, behind only the USA, the UK's world-class higher education sector is a big success, but it is also a potential growth area, and more qualified international students could be welcomed in the near future to build on this success.

On top of that, international students are valuable to the whole of the UK, beyond the positive economic impact they have (British Council, 2018a). It is believed that in addition to their enormous economic impact, they also make British university campuses more diverse, resulting in educational and social benefits. International students make economic, intellectual and cultural contributions. Having built strong professional and personal links here, many of them build long-term benefits for the UK upon returning home. International students and alumni act as powerful ambassadors and friends around the world (Higher Education Policy Insitute, 2018), which in turn enriches UK campuses and the experience of UK students both academically and culturally.

Benefits for individuals and sending countries

Studying at high ranked universities overseas can result in a range of benefits for international students and their countries of origin. Obtaining high-quality credentials, new qualifications and skills, and expanded professional networks and career prospects are among the top benefits for mobile individuals. Universities in both the sending and receiving countries also gain from the investments made by national governments in mobility schemes. Students are encouraged by the policies of their own countries to study overseas. The stated rationales for the scholarship schemes turn on aspiration for national development in order to advance a country's economy and improve its capacity and potential for innovation. A central interest is to foster greater expertise in important fields, particularly those related to science, technology, engineering and mathematics, where domestic training is either unavailable or thought to be of less than 'world-class' quality (British Council, 2014). Some national governments are interested in promoting international study in the hope that experiences abroad will contribute to organisational reform and improved performance back home, for example, to send educators abroad to receive education on improving teaching, learning and ethical awareness in the area of administration (British Council, 2014). Apart from that, returnees offer their home countries' institutions improved knowledge and experience, as well as an expanded set of

professional contacts that can be of service in developing new partnerships, collaborative projects and other opportunities. At the national level, benefits are visible in workforce development (British Council, 2014). There is also a 'multiplier' effect, whereby returnees exert a broader influence on those around them by applying their knowledge and sharing the networks that they have developed overseas.

While international students themselves enjoy many advantages, they may also experience difficulties that native English speakers have never encountered in their own country. International students, especially those traveling abroad for the first time, find that it takes a long time to get used to the new environment, both in terms of academia and daily life (Benzie, 2010). The English language can be a big barrier that hinders international students from doing well. It is understandable that international students who are living and learning in an English-speaking country may encounter many kinds of difficulties. They have to improve their English, better equipping themselves to keep up with the pace in class. When competing with native English-speaking students, they have to overcome the limitation of language to stand out.

More subtly, when learning and living in a purely English context, most international students find themselves lacking a sense of belonging (Benzie, 2010). It is important and helpful to make students feel that they belong in the community or learning setting, and that the content is appropriate to them (Kalantzis, 2005). They have to feel at home with that kind of learning or way of getting to know the world (Kalantzis, Cope and Group, 2005). This might explain why it is not uncommon to see international students getting less involved in classroom interactions than L 1 (English as first language) students (Wang, Moskal and Schweisfurth, 2020). Therefore, while seeing a promising beneficial side to higher education in globalisation, we cannot neglect the struggles international students may encounter when studying in a different teaching and learning context. Higher education (HE), especially internationalised UK higher education, as a crucial stage of students' development, should have a careful investigation on why international students seem less interactive and what kind of challenges that international students may face. Some of these challenges come not only from knowing and using the language, but also knowing when and how to use the language, how to engage in interactions (Wang, Moskal and Schweisfurth, 2020). Talk has been seen as not only the essential tool of teaching and

but also the foundation of learning (Alexander, 2017; Catt and Eke, 1995). Talk, as a key social practice establish social relationships, negotiating social conditions and socially recognised outcomes (Cazden, 2001, Kettle, 2011). In addition, under the global economy and enterprise culture, graduates were also expected to have vocationally-oriented communication skills (Cameron, 2000b). Therefore, talk/spoken language is of vital importance for pedagogy in HE and should not be neglected in teaching and learning (Kettle, 2015). Other than speaking, listening, as the other inseparable element of oracy is also important to understanding teaching and other students' answers (Engin, 2017). Therefore, it is important for students to understand the lecturers'/tutors' expectations on oracy, such as when students are expected or encouraged to talk; what kinds of interactive activities are expected in class and how to verbally engage in interactions. This thesis aims at studying the oracy demands, defined in Chapter Two under the section of *Oracy and pedagogy in HE*, in British higher education to understand international students' – especially Chinese international students' – performance given British education's particular speaking and listening demands, with the ultimate aim of identifying possible improvements to pedagogical practices.

Government policies and student mobility

As a former member of the European Union, the UK was involved in encouraging student mobility, especially in higher education. Both the UK government and universities have been engaged in a push to improve the international competitiveness of the higher education offering since the first decade of the 21st century (Blair, 1999; UKCISA, 2004, 2017; Universities UK, 2006). As early as 1999, Prime Minister Tony Blair called upon universities to 'open a window on the world' (Blair, 1999). One of the key aims of the Prime Minister's Initiative (PMI), launched in 2006, was to consolidate the success of the first PMI through understanding the expectations of international students and improving the quality of all aspects of their experience studying and living in the UK (British Council, 2017). International students have been seen as vital to the current and future health of UK further and higher education, and their contribution is perceived to be academic and cultural as well as financial (Burslem, 2004). In 2017, the Immigration Minister announced that a pilot scheme which is looking at streamlining the process for international Master's students wanting to study in the UK had been extended to an additional 23 universities

(GOV UK, 2017). Currently in its fourth year with the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Bath and Imperial College London, the pilot will streamline the process for international students looking to study on Master's courses of 13 months or less in the UK. The purpose of this decision is to provide greater support for students who wish to switch to a work visa and take up a graduate role by allowing them to remain in the UK for six months after they have finished their course. Therefore, it is incredibly important for international students to have, among others, good oral communication skills so that they can be effective in workplace communication and thus to be competent in work.

Each year, many European students attend British universities. 19% of students studying in higher education in the UK are from outside the UK, of which 6% are from the rest of the EU and 14% are from the rest of the world. Furthermore, 46% of students studying at the postgraduate level in the UK are from outside the EU. Both the British government and Europe have made efforts in contributing to student mobility and enabling universities to become more competitive in a globalised world. Additionally, Asia (the region of origin for 53% of all international students in 2012/13) (ICEF Monitor, 2015), as the engine of growth in global student mobility, has made a great contribution to the internationalisation of British universities. The following Asian countries have a relatively significant share (above 1%) in the number of all students:

Table 1.1 : Share of mobility by major Asian countries of origin

Asian nations	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
China	19.6%	20.1%	21.2%
India	5.3%	4.6%	4.2%
Malaysia	3.2%	3.6%	3.9%
South Arabia	2.2%	2.1%	2%
Singapore	1.4%	1.6%	1.7%

Source: ICEF Monitor (2015) *New OECD report summarises global mobility trends*. Available at: https://monitor.icef.com/2015/11/new-oecd-report-summarises-global-mobility-trends/

In the following sections, I will refer to policies and trends from different regions and countries that demonstrate the role of state funding in encouraging students' international mobility.

National level support in the UK

There are many scholarships, bursaries and grant schemes on offer for students from all over Europe or the rest of the world. Some are designed as global scholarships, like the Chevening Award, the Erasmus+ Programme, Euraxess UK and Royal Society Grants. On top of that, there are quite a lot of scholarships provided for students from particular countries. For example, considering the great profit and benefit brought by the biggest international student body – Chinese students – the UK promoted the Great Britain-China Educational Trust (GBCET) in 2017.

In order to enable more Chinese students to study in the UK, the British Council, together with 31 UK universities, has launched the GREAT Scholarships 2018 – China campaign. With 150 postgraduate scholarships on offer, the total value of the scholarship scheme is nearly £1 million. This new scholarship scheme aims to support highly qualified Chinese students to pursue postgraduate studies in the UK. Students can apply for postgraduate courses in subjects including STEM, arts and social sciences at 31 institutions across the UK (British Council, 2018b).

However, beyond the provided scholarship and grants, have international students got sufficient support during their studies, in their everyday interactions with peers and tutors? This is vital since they are involved in a context with different teaching and learning practices from what they are used to. Can these international students adjust themselves to an English-speaking class quickly? How do they perform in those classes? Is there timely support while learning in the new academic context of the UK higher education? These are all questions that this thesis will go on to consider.

Asian policies

Asian countries such as China and India is considered to be the engine of growth in global student mobility. China and India remain the world's first and second-largest source markets (ICEF Monitor, 2015). In Asia, parents are keen to have their children study and obtain qualifications in the Western world, especially in a native English-speaking country, as there is a belief that this is the best possible education. At the moment, Asia is still by a large margin the most dominant source of international students, followed by Europe (ICEF Monitor, 2015). On top of that, government policies regarding the provision of scholarships or financial aid for either domestic or foreign students are a key factor in some Asian countries.

China's national support for student mobility

The number of Chinese students studying in UK institutions far exceeds that of any other nationality. China is the only country currently showing a significant increase in student numbers (UKCISA, 2017). Moreover, at the time of writing the number of Chinese students enrolled in UK higher education courses har risen to 98,000 (HESA, 2020). The UK is now reliant on students from China: in 2010/11, fewer than one in six international students were from China, but in 2015/16, one in five international students were from China, and that number has now risen to one in four non-EU students (Universities UK International, 2018). Since 2012, the number of Chinese international students has overtaken the enrolment of European international students in British higher education (HESA, 2020). The latest figure shows that in 2018/19, the enrolment of Chinese international students in UK higher education was 120,385, representing 35% of all non-EU international students (HESA, 2020).

Global competition in higher education

Historically, Asian countries have faced a student mobility deficit. It is assessed that in 2015, Asian nations sent around 2.3 million students overseas to study for degrees, whereas they attracted just 928,977 in return (ICEF Monitor, 2016). However, as many Asian countries have started to absorb students, the flow may be poised to reverse itself in the coming future. Asian countries are working hard on striking a balance between outbound and inbound student mobility. They are keen to transform themselves from being pure senders of international students into top education destinations. As discussed above, countries including China, Singapore and Malaysia have eagerly made efforts to increase international recruitment between 2020-25.

As a result of other countries increasing their intake, the UK is facing a challenge in maintaining its position as a top receiver of international students. How then can UK higher education remain a leading power in the global tertiary education competition? Considering the great expectations held by both host and sending countries and the often-neglected struggles that are experienced in a new academic environment, British HE (Higher Education) has to see the room for improvement in terms of considering international students' needs, enabling them to quickly adapt to the changing academic context. As the UK is no longer part of the EU, Chinese students will become increasingly important in the post-Brexit environment. Therefore, in order to remain one of the most desirable destinations in this global competition, it is vital that UK considers its pedagogical perspective and educational offer in order to keep attracting international students. It is crucial for many disciplines such as business, education, engineering and other areas, to equip students with necessary communicative capacity which will not only help them in interviews, but also enables them with strong speaking abilities to solve problems in workplace. Teaching and learning are key components of the UK educational attractiveness and, integral to these are speaking and listening (Catt and Eke, 1995; Laurillard, 1996). It is through the interaction between tutors and students that education is achieved (Catt and Eke, 1995; Laurillard, 1996); therefore, speaking and listening are inseparable elements of oracy worth studying with respect to not only enhancing pedagogical practices and classroom learning outcomes, but also get students ready for their future careers with effective communication skills.

Researcher's motivation

As a bilingual researcher, it was my own personal experience of awkward silences in class and the sharp contrast between Chinese international students' and L1 students' oral participation in classes, all of which I noticed when I first studied in the UK, that made me interested in investigating Chinese international students' participation in the oracy demands of UK higher education. As a second language learner, I had lacked confidence for a whole year after I first switched my major to English during my undergraduate studies. I almost never answered teacher questions voluntarily because I lacked confidence in speaking English and did not want my classmates to think my English was weak if I made any grammatical mistakes or did not speak fluently. At that stage, there were a few students whose oral English was very good and fluent in my eyes, which made me think that I would never be as good an English speaker as they were. My lack of confidence in speaking in English and my concerns of being looked down upon by those 'good' English-speaking students prevented me from bravely expressing my ideas in front of the whole class. In this sense, I felt that being silent and not giving answers voluntarily was a good way for me to avoid potential embarrassment.

After spending a whole year listening carefully in each English class and paying attention to how my Chinese English teachers organised their sentences, I gradually gained confidence in speaking English. Over time I built up confidence in speaking English and realised that I could speak English well. When I first came to the UK to pursue my master's degree, I noticed the silence among most Chinese international students again, which made me interested in digging out some of the key causes underneath. My own experience indicates that silence in class is a phenomenon worth studying and that listening ability is also vital for students' English oral communication skills. The following section is a brief introduction to the importance of oracy.

The oracy premium

Oracy is defined by Wilkinson (1965) as "the capacity of using the oral skills of speaking and listening as well as their interplay in verbal interaction", and Wilkinson argues that this

"should be seen as prominent as literacy and numeracy in education" (p. 58). The speaking element of oracy is central to classroom activities in which learning is achieved through the co-construction of knowledge between students and lecturers or enabled through group tasks (Kettle and May, 2012). A thorough explanation of the relationship between oracy, talk and interaction will be presented in Chapter Two.

Oracy—essential in globalisation

As a trend of world-wide convergence in education and other sectors, globalisation, according to Held *et al. (1999)*, is changing the situation in which English is learned as a second language (ESL) or additional language (EAL) and has placed growing importance on English language speaking and listening. Economic and cultural globalisation include the globalisation of language and English has been used as a global lingua franca (Crystal, 2003).It has become the central language of communication in business, politics, administration, science and academia, as well as being the dominant language of globalised advertising and popular culture (Held *et al.*, 1999).

Meanwhile, the use of English as a common cross-border language has shifted from a primary focus on written communication to continued written communication plus a growing emphasis on oral communication (Sawir, 2005). Because of the global economy and enterprise culture, oral communication has become a key skill, which has led to an increasing number of vocationally-oriented communication skills courses being provided (Cameron, 2000b). Furthermore, linguistic globalisation, driven by more and closer cross-border ties in business, education and other sectors, becomes manifest in intensified communication and travel. Increased communicative interactions, and English language exposure in media, education and business have placed a growing importance on listening and speaking skills, i.e. on oracy. English as a lingua franca has prevailed in almost all professional and business domains across the world and good oral skills in English are urgently required by anyone working in the global business interface. This is especially important in bilateral or multilateral businesses and co-operations in the modern globalised market. Therefore, it is of vital importance for international students to pay attention to oracy in order to be attractive and competent in the labour market after finishing their higher education. However, some studies (Ballard, 1987; Ng, 2007; Benzie,

2010; Engin, 2017; Heng, 2018; Heron, 2018; Heron and Webster, 2018; Wang, Moskal and Schweisfurth, 2020) suggest that it is not an easy journey for international students to reach the goal of oracy competence. Living and learning in a foreign country and being immersed into a solely English teaching and learning context, international ESL students may tend to avoid oracy in class. Although globalisation has led to the growing importance of English oracy, international students may not be fully ready to face the demands.

This study therefore aims to achieve a rich understanding of the issues faced by Chinese international students and how pedagogy might be improved to enable them to be become active and effective English users in oracy. This leads to the research problem: If oracy is considered integral to pedagogy, how do Chinese international students experience and perform the oracy demands (Lecturers'/tutors' expectation on speaking and listening)? A formal definition of oracy demands is defined in Chapter Two, under the section of "Oracy and pedagogy in HE".

Oracy as a pedagogical need

In HE, it is of vital importance that Chinese students are given sufficient pedagogical support to prepare them to be orally competent. In the past several decades, the communicative approach to language teaching has addressed this strategic imperative (Savignon, 1993, 1997). In Western countries like the UK, more communicative pedagogy has prevailed since the 1960s, foregrounding activities and dialogue in the classroom and beyond. The shift from a teacher-centred transmission teaching approach to collaborative knowledge construction (Dall'Alba, 2005) has also accelerated the importance of talk. Students are asked to accomplish tasks with autonomy, working co-dependently and co-constructively, making learning a scaffolded cognitive exercise that is facilitated by informed students and teacher mentors (Lantolf, 2007). These tasks are predominately mediated by talk, while intellectual, social and personal goals are achieved by the means of talk.

However, many international ESL students find themselves with low or inadequate oral competence, which is especially obvious when communicating or competing with students whose mother tongue is English. It is common to see international students who seem out

of their depth during group discussions (Lee, 2010). Many international students prioritise active listening rather than speaking (Kettle, 2005); others may have communication apprehension (Horwitz, 2001), which is particularly commonly experienced among students from more conservative cultural backgrounds (Song, 1995) in an English-speaking classroom. Traditional EFL pedagogies in East and Southeast Asian nations are not fully adequate to prepare students for the expanded emphasis on oral communications (Sawir, 2005). As Sawir points out, traditional pedagogies tend to be teacher-centred and focus exclusively on learning to understand English-language materials and write English essays, but they pay little attention to English conversation skills. Teachers who had been schooled in a scholastic approach to the language and have focused on grammar and correct usage with little awareness of oral communication normally feel most comfortable teaching their own students with the same approach (Sawir, 2005). However, the teacher-centred approach is worth reconsideration because of the enormous demands of English oral competence in the face of a growing globalisation. The profound need for listening and speaking skills cannot be avoided. In other words, it is time to pay due attention to oracy.

Speaking is not only important to English language or education students; it is also crucial to other disciplines like business and other social science areas because these students will have to prove their communicative capacity in interviews and will need strong speaking abilities to solve problems in real-world work. However, although it has been acknowledged that oracy plays a vital role in academic learning in the "soft" (Becher, 1989) disciplines, like humanities and social science, "hard" disciplines which rely heavily on mathematics or experiments, such as accountancy, mathematics, physics and engineering, may emphasise less student talk in class. Therefore, this thesis will pursue a cross-disciplinary study to analyse the demands of oracy across subject areas. The following research questions will inform this study:

1. What are the oracy demands in UK higher education?
2. How do oracy demands differ across disciplines?
3. How do Chinese international students and L1 (English as first language) students experience and perform such oracy demands?
4. What assistance is offered to Chinese international learners to help them address such oracy demands?

Summary of the research problem

Every host country recognises the cultural and economic benefits of cultivating internationally significant universities. Therefore, encouraging international students to come to the UK, from the researcher's point of view, should be central to the UK's economic strategy and a key part of supporting a post-Brexit world. Meanwhile, UK higher education should take individual needs into account in terms of offering students services that match what they have invested. With such a significant body of international students in the UK, it is timely to investigate international students' classroom participation in HE. With the growth of a global educational market, Chinese international students, who form the vast majority of international learners, make a particular contribution to the UK's internationalised HE. Therefore, in this thesis, my participants are Chinese international students who have learnt English for years before entering a British university and their L1 (English as first language) peers.

With the expectations of their parents, the UK and their mother country, Chinese international students may have a difficult learning experience on their way to achieving their academic goals. Their situation should be given sufficient attention and therefore, it is important and timely to study the matter from a pedagogical view to understand Chinese international students' oral participation in classes. Of particular interest is oracy as a key area that may reveal students' knowledge and understanding and their engagement with classroom processes, as well as an important self-selling skill in job interviews and in other contexts of work. Universities prepare international students for futures in both academia and labour, and they should therefore pay significant attention to oracy so as to make international students fully equipped. However, recent literature reports that international Chinese students tend to avoid oracy and are less active in engaging in classroom interaction for a number of reasons (Benzie, 2010; Engin, 2017; Heng, 2018; Heron, 2018; Heron and Webster, 2018). This raises the question of whether Chinese international students' participation today is as passive as such literature claims.

This research of oracy in HE is situated at a historical juncture where enhancing students' English oracy is crucial for both the UK educational system and the Chinese international students. Encouraging Chinese international students to speak in HE is not only important in order to meet academic demands, but also to prepare them for the job market in the context of globalisation. Therefore, pedagogy and ways of teaching and how they can be adapted considering the internalisation of HE must be carefully studied.

It is with this particular focus — the oracy demands across disciplines in UK HE — and with this particular international group — Chinese international students — that this research is concerned. Two courses from two very different disciplines, the 'hard' and the 'soft', are selected as sample disciplines. The next chapter will critically review the existing literature on Chinese international students, the disciplinary differences and the importance of oracy, based on which I shall identify the research gap and pin down my research focus.

Chapter 2 Literature review

This chapter offers a literature review of existing studies about how Chinese international students' classroom performance in various HE settings has been understood, as well as oracy in HE in terms of the teaching and learning processes and students' future careers. It will critically review the trends in how Chinese international students have been understood by two different groups of scholars. The debates around Chinese international students' classroom performance will raise questions about how these students have performed in UK HE settings and how their performance, in terms of listening and speaking in class, has been understood. This chapter will also identify literature regarding the potential variance in oracy demands among different disciplines, and I will present a critical review of studies about disciplinary differences and their influence on pedagogy. It is this intersection between the oracy demands within disciplines and Chinese international students' participation in HE that is of particular interest and relevance to this study.

The construction of Chinese international students as a problem

This section will review a dominant understanding of Chinese international students that has prevailed among Western scholars and will identify where this understanding has originated. Specifically, international students, in particular Chinese international students, have a history of being depicted as a "problem" or "deficit" for Western pedagogy. Chinese international students are pictured as quiet and passive in class and it is regarded as difficult for lecturers/tutors to get them to speak in groups or in front of the class. What follows is a review of the literature that has treated Chinese international students as problematic in Western higher education.

In 1987, Ballard wrote a highly cited article based on the experiences of university staff who worked with international students. She conducted the research at the Study Skills Unit of the Australian National University and through extended study tours in Southeast Asia and Burma to better understand students by studying their cultural and educational background. Ballard contrasted local and international students' demands for support services and found that the Confucian cultural script gave supreme authority to teachers

(p. 114). According to her description, Asian international students typically did not dare to question teachers and have not cultivated the habit of critically thinking, analysing and evaluating. As a result, when students from Asian countries come to study in Western countries, they had a 'deficit' in terms of both their academic capacity and their language competence (p. 116). Therefore, Ballard suggests that Asian international students should be assisted with language and academic skills, which require changes in both teaching styles and study habits. In addition, Ballard argues that more language assistance should be available throughout the whole period of students' courses because of Asian students' relatively poor command of the English language. This study was influential in establishing the 'problem' with international students from Confucian backgrounds.

In line with Ballard's findings, Ng (2007) conducted a qualitative study in order to understand the learning challenges experienced by Asian students in the UK HE, as well as students' perspectives of the value of their business education in the UK. She conducted student interviews and a focus group interview and observed two Chinese students, one Singaporean, and three students from Taiwan and Thailand. All the participants were attending a business school at a British university. The interviews and observations suggested that the Asian students would not usually participate during class discussions. Some interviewed students said they "dared to speak out" (p. 46) a bit more in the UK, whereas they would not do so in their home countries.

Like Ballard, Ng (2007) raises the importance of cultural influences in terms of educational epistemology and learning habits. For example, Ng argues that much of the education in the far East is based on rote learning, while critical thinking, rather than memorisation, is the key to academic success in Western universities. Additionally, Confucian cultures tend to treat teachers' words as the "gospel truth" (Ng, 2007, p. 50) and this cultural habit causes students to seek "right" (p. 49) answers rather than "good" (p. 49) answers. Ng argues that Chinese international students should be assisted in understanding Western-based education. Other studies, conducted by Barker *et al.* (1991) and by Tweed and Lehman (2002), also highlight the difficulties Chinese international students have adapting to Western higher education.

Both Ballad and Ng promote explicit teaching in order to help international students learn how to use laboratory equipment and develop library skills, and to increase the curriculum's applicability to Eastern contexts. While it is helpful that both Ballad and Ng call for Western teachers to understand Chinese international students from their cultural perspective and urge them to adapt their teaching styles, neither of them understand the mobile Chinese international students in any historical context, nor through any of their motives seeking new experiences and being able to adapt, instead seeing them simply as a "deficit".

Do UK higher educators still approach the Chinese international student as a "problem"? Are Chinese international students nowadays still seen as a "deficit" in learning in higher education compared with L1 students? This project is interested in investigating how Chinese international students are currently engaged in the British HE context.

The reconstruction of Chinese international students

In contrast to Ballard's deficit construction of Asian international students, Kubota's (2001) research examines the discursive construction of images of the US classroom and criticises the typical construction of "Asian students". She argues that this discourse of "culturally different Asian learners" was essentialised and polarised by the concepts of the Other and Self (p. 10). Kubota's review of the existing literature suggests that US classrooms are not that different from Asian classrooms, but rather are depicted in an idealised image – active, creative and student-centred – and this ideal portrayal prevails only to accentuate cultural differences. Kubota argues that the applied linguistics literature tends to highlight cultural differences and take Asian culture as the Other, which results in the convenient category of the "Asian learner" (p. 23). However, in contrast to the idealised image portrayed by applied linguistics literature that essentialised cultural differences, Kubota reports that US classrooms are sometimes observed to be passive and teacher-dominated. Furthermore, some studies have shown that Chinese students outperform US students in both computation and problem-solving. Kubota argues that this literature challenges the discursive Othering of the "Asian learner" and calls for a reconstruction of Chinese international students.

Leask (2006) also suggests that university teachers should reconstruct the typical image of international students, rather than portraying them as the "Other". Drawing on existing literature, Leask rejects "Orientalism" which is a "style of thought" dividing the world into two unequal halves: "the Orient" or "the East", and "the Occident" or "the West" (p. 185). She suggests that all students, to a large extent, are "cultural others" seeking acceptance into the academic community, and one of the vital roles of the university teacher is to assist students in transferring into not only the academic community, but also the particular disciplinary community.

These studies by Kubota and Leask have implications for preparatory programmes, which tend to be generic and overlook disciplinary differences. This research raises the important issue that few studies have been conducted to examine Chinese international students' performances in various disciplines. It is worth studying how disciplinary contexts may require students to perform and investigating whether student participation varies when the nature of the discipline is taken into account. This consideration on disciplinary influence will be further studied in the section of "Disciplinary differences and oracy demands within".

Leask's findings suggested that staff need to recognise every student as an adaptable learner entering a different environment, and thus the need to produce an academic culture which can engage students from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Leask also argues that teachers, as intercultural learners, can benefit from learning from students and becoming able to use differences as resource. She also considers it to be a teacher's responsibility to make their expectations explicit, with adequate opportunities provided for students' practice. As an important process of feedback, Leask argues that assessment and evaluation should also involve a great deal of communication. Finally, Leask suggests that universities should broaden the teaching team by having academic staff and professional development staff work together in terms of skill training and assessment task design (2006, p. 194).

In line with Kubota and Leask's research, Doherty and Singh (2007) also seek to dispel the image of the deficient Asian learner. Drawing on Hall's theory of identity, they question the dominant construction of the "Asian learner" and argue that universities and teachers

design their pedagogy according to how “Asian students” are habitually constructed. Their study draws on 24 semi-structured interviews with students, stimulated recall interviews with teachers and video recordings of classroom observations. The interviews were conducted with 32 students who attended academic preparation courses at an Australian university. The interview questions asked about the students’ reasons for studying in Australia, their English learning experiences, their experiences of different teaching practices and their understandings of “East” and “West” values, as well as their expectations of the preparatory courses. All the interviewees were from East and Southeast Asia, except one whose nationality was not recorded. The findings suggest that some students were frustrated with the preparatory studies in Australia as they had limited chances to mix with local students and felt separated from the “real” university practices (p. 123), as they sat in a lecture hall of 300 people, just listening without having chances to engage in real speaking. The students could have easily slipped into a situation which would treat them as culturally different. However, via strategies of re-articulation in their cultural representations, the students challenged and disrupted the image of the orthodox “Asian learner” (p. 127). During the interviews, in terms of Eastern and Western values, similarities rather than differences were reported by the students. Some students reconstructed the premises for curricular design by taking their needs for language competency into account, stating that they required more explicit and pertinent linguistic feedback. Some students constructed themselves as more adaptable, an account which was at odds with the view of culturally circumscribed characteristics. The findings reveal that students could work both within and beyond this “Asian learner” construction to represent themselves and their needs in various ways. Will the Chinese international students in my study similarly break this framing? Will their accounts of their performances highlight cultural differences or other learning factors? It is worth probing to understand how and why my participants might perform in class in particular ways.

Heng's (2018) more recent research on Chinese students’ learning experiences in higher education in the USA also strongly dispels the influential deficit perspective regarding Chinese international students. Using a “hybridized sociocultural framework” (p. 24), which situates participants within their previous and current contexts, Heng tries to arrive at a more holistic understanding of their experiences. A qualitative research method was adopted using demographic questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Via a snowball

sampling approach, Heng recruited 18 participants: nine students in year one and nine in year two. Heng's participants were all young (under 20), single, on student visas and had no prior educational experience outside of China. They were studying in three private, four-year liberal arts colleges in a large city in North East USA. The students were interviewed three times: at the beginning, middle and end of their academic year in their preferred language (mostly Mandarin). All 18 participants majored in mathematics, engineering or business-related subjects. The fact that these students were from a variety of disciplines highlights that it is worth considering students' performance in a broader set of disciplines, but Heng's study missed the opportunity to investigate whether different disciplines create different kinds of contexts for international students. The preparatory courses all glossed over disciplinary difference, treating Western pedagogy as generic and universal. Therefore, with very few studies having looked at Chinese students' experiences in different disciplines, instead of limiting my research to language-related disciplines, this study will look into student oral performance in different disciplines.

Heng's findings regarding students' concerns about their oracy skills is in line with Doherty and Singh's research, as well as other studies such as those by Benzie (2010) and Andrade (2010), reviewed below. Some participants found it took them 10 to 15 seconds to organise their responses before they were ready to speak out, which usually meant that they failed to seize the chance to speak. They also reported that native English speakers spoke very fast, making it even harder to understand. However, over time, students reported feeling more comfortable speaking in class, and the more they dared to speak, the more they felt their English improved. This finding aligns with Kubota (2001), Leask (2006) and Doherty and Singh's (2007) studies, which foreground how Asian ESL students can adapt to a new or different environment and should not be considered deficient, inferior or unchangeable "Others". Rather, they could be better understood as flexible and adaptable. In contrast to Ballard's perspective that Chinese students learn by rote memorisation and are less likely to think critically (p. 113), Heng's participants reportedly did improve their critical thinking over time as they learnt to question, refute arguments and explore alternatives. In addition, Heng's interview findings suggest that what was often understood as deficient logic among Chinese learners might have been just a difference in the way of communicating. Like Ballard, Ng and Leask, Heng recommends more explicit instruction and academic

expectations to benefit international students, especially when those academic writing norms are different from those of their home countries.

Aside from writing norms, though, what are the oracy norms that students should be aware of and respond? Do oracy demands differ from those in international students' home countries? If there were a sharp difference in terms of oracy expectations, it might be inferred that the oracy demands in the UK higher education may be different from the oracy demands that are required by international students' home universities. These are questions that will frame my own study, and I will explore them in my findings chapters in this thesis.

Benzie (2010) offers a literature-based study which is informed by the socio-cultural theory of language learning, looking into the contexts where learning happens. It offers insights into why students' language skills did not improve when they acquired their degrees in English; why lecturers expected students to reach the native speaker level or have command of English socially; and the reasons why Chinese international students lacked an acknowledgement of "the English language demands in higher education" (p. 452). In contrast to the perception that language learning is merely the acquisition of words with grammatical and phonological forms, according to Benzie, Chinese international learners could experience struggles and pain to transfer from one culture to another (p. 453). She argues that students need to be involved in various practices in their particular discipline and be able to switch between genres and academic practices. She highlights the importance of disciplinary particulars that need to be taken into account when studying international students' performances. For this reason, this study will have a specific focus on the oracy demands within disciplines with respect to Chinese international students' verbal participation in class.

Additionally, Benzie argues that university staff have less awareness of how to support students in transferring from their studies into professions, rather than continuing in academia. Benzie also suggests that immersion in an English-speaking culture as a whole should be enhanced and more opportunities for a full immersion experience for international students should be provided. Apart from such immersion, she reports that classroom activities which involve collaboration need to be encouraged by mixing local

students and international students in groups. Ideally, successful group work strategies should be taught explicitly. Also, mixing students in groups would promote intercultural engagement which would, in turn, promote both linguistic proficiency and cultural knowledge.

From the perspective of a social-cultural theory of language learning, Benzie argues that international students should not be blamed for their struggles in learning. Rather it becomes the responsibility of the academics in the disciplines to enhance students' learning experience. She argues that the simple belief that Chinese international students have low English levels neglects the fact that home L1 students could also have English language difficulties. She further argues that the narrow understanding of language learning may result in a construction of "student as problem," which thus may lead to the belief that Chinese international students are "deficient" in learning (p. 451).

In line with Benzie, Andrade (2010) conducted a survey of 93 academic staff in an American university to explore "how faculty perceived the English abilities of international students and how they approached teaching them" (p. 225). She argues that institutions must be accountable for supporting their students and adjusting methods of instruction in order to meet students' needs. Her findings show that participants rated international students as being more competent in passive skills (reading and listening) than in active skills (writing and speaking) (p. 228). However, these teachers reported that they would not compromise the quality of their courses regardless of the number of international students and would treat all students fairly and equitably: "Faculty do not report that they are accommodating students in terms of making their courses easier or that having large numbers of L2 students negatively impacts their teaching" (p. 228). Nevertheless, these disciplinary academics are reported to be primarily focused on how to help students understand the disciplinary content rather than on enhancing students' English competency. Andrade's recommendations are in line with Benzie's suggestion that it is part of academics' role to support students in discipline-specific conventions and not to separate disciplinary knowledge from academic literacy (Benzie, 2010, p. 455). Viewing students as having responsibility for their own linguistic competence, the participating faculty members in Andrade's study reported minimal interest in either improving students' English skills or receiving pedagogic training with respect to teaching ESL students. Specifically, although

university staff felt that their international students could benefit from their additional support, they had only “moderate interest” (p. 229) in pedagogic efforts with respect to students’ needs regarding language acquisition. This finding is also consistent with Benzie’s study of academics who reportedly were not keen on developing their students’ English language competence. However, according to Benzie, this attitude of holding students alone accountable for linguistic proficiency comes from the concept of “Othering” that defines others in opposition to oneself within a particular group and thus judges international students as “deficient” in learning. As reported by Andrade, findings indicate that staff did not want to take much responsibility for their students’ English skill development and did not want to commit to enhancing international students’ English abilities, despite the fact that almost half of the university enrolment was international students.

It can be seen that in Andrade’s study, some university teachers continue to interpret international students through the process of “Othering”. The studies conducted by Benzie (2010), Doherty and Singh (2007), Leask, (2006), Kubota (2001) and Heng (2018) argue that Chinese international students should not be essentialised by their cultural status, but rather they should be understood in a historical, social-cultural context. According to the reviewed literature, instead of treating international students as “deficit” or “Others”, university staff could take more accountability for enhancing international students’ linguistic and disciplinary learning, which could be implemented via explicit teaching, broadening teaching teams and finding ways to improve pedagogical design.

Oracy and pedagogy in HE

Social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978), as a key socio-cultural theory of learning, has been highly influential in Western educational practices in the past three decades (Krahenbuhl, 2016; Stigmar, 2016). Stigmar's (2016) study shows that social constructivism is the dominant pedagogy in HE across disciplines. Social constructivism understands the learning process as an interactional process between a learner and a more knowledgeable knower (Vygotsky, 1978). In other words, social constructivism posits that knowledge is created by humans through meaning-making processes that are accomplished through interaction

(Stigmar, 2016). Social constructivism pedagogy has informed a trend of research highlighting the co-construction of knowledge between the teacher and students, and among students. Interaction is considered important in terms of managing the construction of knowledge together. This constructivist pedagogy acknowledges the importance of oracy, especially through interactions between a learner and a more capable knower (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 90) as a way to build knowledge.

As stated in Chapter One, oracy is defined by Wilkinson (1965) as "the ability to use the oral skills of speaking and listening" (p. 13) and is considered as important as literacy in educational settings. Oracy is often studied as classroom talk, interaction or communication in school and HE settings. For the purposes of this thesis, the phrase 'oracy demands' refers to lecturers'/tutors' expectations regarding students' listening and speaking with respect to their curriculum and pedagogic design. Specifically, it refers to whether lecturers/tutors expect their students to talk or to listen and what kinds of talk (for example, student answers, student questions or group discussion) they expect students to engage in.

Good oracy capacity requires students to be able to "adjust" their talk to meet the exigencies of each and every situation appropriately (MacLure, 1988, p. 150). According to Alexander (2001), talk happens in social, cultural and educational contexts, and therefore, talk is fundamental to teaching and learning (Alexander, 2017; Jones, 2017). Learning has recently come to be understood as an interactional process (Vygotsky, 1978; Wray and Kumpulainen, 2010; Alexander, 2017; Jones, 2017) that is accomplished through teacher and student talk (Wray and Kumpulainen, 2010). In other words, the understanding of knowledge and acquisition of new knowledge come from talk in interaction (Cameron, 2000; Mercer, 1995). As a result, "Classroom interactions lie at the heart of pedagogy." (Schweisfurth, 2015, p. 259).

However, Catt and Eke (1995) argue that despite being a vital issue for research in education and the key to understanding the process of education, the subject of talk is often neglected in HE. Similarly, in an Australian study, Doherty *et al.* (2011) argue that "talk is often taken for granted" (p. 5), even though it is considered essential to

constructivist pedagogy. Therefore, it is timely to investigate talk in classroom interactions in the HE context with respect to pedagogic challenges and improvement.

Talk and interaction in HE

This section shall critically review the literature on talk and interaction in HE, taking a chronological approach. It aims to show how thinking about talk in pedagogy has been researched and understood over time. The literature to be reviewed highlights the importance of student talk in class and the vital role that interaction plays in contributing to teaching and learning.

In an early study, Catt and Eke (1995) highlight the importance of classroom talk in HE. Based on Wood, Bruner and Ross' (1976) theory of learning as "an essentially social process" (Catt and Eke, 1995, p. 363), the study uses video-recording as a tool for overcoming the difficulty of examining teaching while teaching. The authors interviewed a group of third-year student teachers in a UK university. Catt and Eke found that, "talk is central to education and central to the accomplishment of educational events" (p. 363) because if there were no talk, there would be no education. This finding aligns with Watson's (1991) argument that language is the instrument for life and emphasises the importance of language and "linguistic interchanges" (Watson, 1991, p. 2) in everyday life and education. Cat and Eke's study suggests that there were still misunderstandings about pedagogy among the interviewed students who saw "teaching as transmission" (p. 364) and felt that teaching would discourage talk. It is also reported by Catt and Eke that even if students do not necessarily make contributions to the interaction, they could still be learning, because they could actively engage in listening. Additionally, students reported that they appreciated their lecturer's effort in preparing teaching and maintaining a lively and enthusiastic manner. As Catt and Eke argue, "A challenging learning environment is central within the constructivist approach and meaningful talk is the medium of intellectual development" (p. 366). They also conclude that it is important to seek students' evaluation of the course design and encourage them to voice what they most enjoy because asking for students' input is an important correction on 'teacher knows best' and encourages teachers to collaborate with the students. No one group has all the answers; therefore, I would argue that effective pedagogy will be a negotiation between both parties. Catt and

Eke argue that while talk is "key to teachers' understanding of how education is accomplished" (p. 367), it has been relatively neglected in HE. Furthermore, they point out that in-depth discussion as a feature of classroom talk is a means of improving understanding in HE. Also, they believe that in this context there is great potential for investigating talk to play a part in learning because students can also contribute their experience and reflective expertise.

In a more recent Australian study, Arkoudis *et al.* (2013) raise the lack of research into classroom talk as an issue in HE. Their study poses the following research question, "in what ways can university teaching promote interaction between students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds?" (p. 225). Using focus group interviews with six academic staff and six student groups and video-analysis methodology, they developed a six-dimensional Interaction for Learning Framework as guidance for teaching practice. The participants were selected from three universities in Australia via purposeful sampling. A total of six academic staff, two at each of the three universities, and 35 students (20 undergraduates, 15 postgraduates) from these three universities participated in the interviews.

The six themes of the learning framework produced from the analysis were: planning for interaction, creating an environment for interaction, supporting interaction, engaging with subject knowledge, developing a reflective process and fostering communities of learners. Specifically, Arkoudis et al. suggest that it is key to set expectations in order to engage students and that these expectations explicitly emphasise peer interaction throughout the semester. This argument for explicit expectations also aligns with advocacy for more explicit pedagogy by several other scholars (Ballard, 1987; Doherty and Singh, 2007; Ng, 2007; Benzie, 2010; Heng, 2018). Additionally, Arkoudis *et al*. argue that it is important to use strategies like icebreakers, social tutorials and changing seats or relocating tables in the first week of classes to open up students' communication. On top of that, they recommend the development of processes such as encouraging peer feedback in order to cultivate students' critical thinking and make them reflect on their studying. In conclusion, these authors argue that academic staff should have awareness of the possibilities for improvement and apply useful pedagogic strategies in terms of highlighting classroom interaction.

While the above studies put a good deal of emphasis on interaction with classroom peers, the interaction between the teacher and students is also of great importance in terms of co-constructing meaning and ultimately facilitating learning. A group of studies that look into the issue of classroom talk between teacher and students will be presented here. However, as they suggest, the focus should not be only on talk, but also on the complementary role of silence. Some existing literature claims that international ESL students can be silent or reluctant to interact with teachers in class. Jin (2017) examines the phenomenon of silence and the reasons behind this reticence. Drawing on sociocultural theories, Jin adopted a qualitative case study with multiple data sources including video-recordings of classes and stimulated recall interviews, and then used discourse analysis to analyse her data. Jin's research took place in the Faculty of Dentistry in an institution in China with 16 first-year undergraduate learners and two facilitator participants. The findings suggest that "silence occurs when students construct and negotiate multiple identities; when reconstructing their identities and when students' multiple identities are constructed in the situation of marginalisation and resistance in the group" (p. 333). Her findings suggest that even though students are silent, they may still be learning, which is in line with Catt and Eke's argument. However, Jin's study does not offer answers or solutions to enhance classroom interaction, and the recommendations are aimed at students rather than teachers.

Engin (2017) looks into learners' experiences of dialogic interaction as part of seminar discussions in an MA TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) programme at a British university. 11 full-time MA TESOL students were recruited in the study. All were international students studying English as a second language. Among them, five had English language teaching experience, while the rest had no previous teaching experience. Applying Alexander's (2001) concept of dialogic teaching in her own teaching practice, dialogic interaction is defined by Alexander (2017) as: "Achieving common understanding through structured, cumulative questioning and discussion which guide and prompt, reduce choices, minimize risk and error, and expedite 'handover' of concepts and principles" (p. 30). Engin used interviews with stimulated recall, audio-recordings of classes and assignments to collect data on students' experiences of the classroom talk. She conducted interviews twice: once prior to the course, and the other one month after the end of the programme. The second interview included stimulated recall about selected

extracts from the video-recordings of the classes. This stimulated recall allowed students to comment on their feelings at that moment. Engin argues that this design increases the reliability of responses because it can 'jog memories' and elicit accounts of what 'I did', rather than what I 'might have done' (citing Dempsey, 2010, p. 350). The interviews provide the students' perceptions of discussions and the stimulated recall allows the researcher to hear their interpretations of the talk.

Engin, as both participant and researcher, designed the tasks in an explicit way. At the beginning of the course, she explicitly introduced what counted as legitimate talk and reinforced it throughout the semester. Her tasks included purposeful discussions which encouraged supportive and cumulative dialogue. The concept of dialogic interaction was introduced at the beginning of the course and was reinforced before every discussion of expectations, particularly emphasising the need to build on each other's ideas. Therefore, an account of "desirable" (p. 80) academic talk was explicitly presented and reinforced throughout the course. This aligns with the conclusion of Doherty et al. (2011) that explicit teaching about legitimate modes of talk and assessment can help students have a better understanding of the requirements and to perform well in the assessment.

Engin's (2017) findings suggest that ESL international students need to learn both disciplinary knowledge and disciplinary language. Furthermore, a lack of the necessary linguistic resources, the prioritisation of listening and the lack of time to translate one's mother language into English before speaking can cause anxiety and silence in class. However, this last point suggests that being silent is not necessarily the same as being passive, which resonates with the findings reported in the studies conducted by Catt and Eke (1995) and Jin (2017). The findings of these studies confirm that university teachers cannot assume reasons for silence because it is a result of a complex learning process situated in a particular educational context. Within a friendly class environment, giving appropriate tasks, allowing preparation time and teaching explicitly are reported by Engin as ways of enhancing the academic talk. Engin's findings indicate that listening is also important to understanding teaching and other students' answers. As an inseparable part of oracy, listening should be given equal attention with respect to students' classroom interactions. My study will not only investigate whether Chinese international students speak actively in class, but I will also explore the role and importance of listening in learning.

Heron (2018) analyses classroom talk from the teachers' perspective using a qualitative research method and drawing on stimulated recall interviews. The research took place at a UK university and centred around three seminars taught by three tutors with varying levels of teaching experience. The student populations of these three seminars differed, having either all local British students or all Chinese international students. In terms of the research method, according to Gass and Mackey (2000), stimulated recall interviews should be done immediately after the event. Therefore, it is questionable whether the stimulated recall interviews were still of high validity since Heron did them two weeks or one month after the seminar. This is important in my view because stimulated recall interviews aim to jog the participant's memory in order to elicit what was happening in the moment rather than what might happened. However, if the time gap is too long, the interviewee's memory of the reason that he/she did something might be blurred, which may have been the case in Heron's interviews of the tutors. Further discussion on the subject of stimulated recall interviews will be developed in Chapter Four.

Heron's findings suggest that "there is always the conflict of values, instructional stance and the reality of the classroom" (p. 122). Additionally, Heron highlights possible cultural constraints with respect to pragmatics and the notion of "face". "Face" is an important factor in Chinese culture (Ellwood and Nakane, 2009): "losing face" is an expression referring to feelings of humiliation in front of others because of wrongdoing or inappropriate words or behaviour. This concern about losing face in front of one's peers or lecturer/tutor may pose challenges in supporting Chinese international students in seminars. Heron's interview analysis reports that Chinese students feared 'losing face' in front of their peers and tutor, which hindered them from interacting. Furthermore, social-cultural factors were found to affect local students' willingness to participate. Linguistic competency could be another critical factor that impacted Chinese international students' performance in speaking. Finally, Heron points out that disciplinary differences can influence learning and teaching practice, which resonates with Ng's (2007) statement that "disciplines can also be viewed as cultures" (p. 41), as will be discussed later in this chapter in the section *Disciplinary differences and oracy demands within*. Therefore, these studies suggest that it is worth purposefully studying across different disciplines to understand students' performance in their own fields of knowledge so that improvements on

pedagogic practice and assistance can be achieved within specific disciplinary cultures. The arguments for why disciplines should be taken into consideration with respect to students' participation will be explained in detail in the following section.

As the above studies highlight the importance of student talk, recent study conducted by Heron and Webster (2018) investigated how to scaffold talk in EAP (English for Academic Purposes) lessons. This study investigated experienced teachers' practices to see how academic staff scaffold ESL students' understanding of English for academic purposes through classroom talk. The research was conducted in a UK university and involved four experienced EAP teachers and 43 students from different backgrounds, but mostly from China. Drawing from the work of Van de Pol, Volman and Beishuizen (2010) about scaffolding student talk in class, they gathered data by video-recording lessons and through stimulated recall interviews. The data reveals that classroom talk of pre-session and in-session (first-year undergraduate) students was significantly different with respect to explicit reference to EAP goals, because "classroom discourse is oriented to the fulfilling of EAP pedagogic goals" (p. 9) for both pre-session and in-session courses. The pre-session pedagogic goals were short-term and "related to a specific stage of an activity" (p. 9). Heron and Webster argue that this is understandable as the students in the pre-sessional classes were not yet members of a particular disciplinary culture. This is in line with Heron's (2018) findings, mentioned above, that different disciplinary contexts can be expected to generate different types of classroom talk. Although Engin's two studies were conducted in the context of language classrooms, their findings suggest that disciplines can be an influential factor when studying students' performances. Therefore, disciplines should be investigated with respect to students' verbal participation in class. In contrast, in-session classes are designed with the long-term goal of understanding lessons and curricula. It was reported that teachers used more efficient classroom talk to scaffold students' understanding in terms of the lesson goals, while the goal of the pre-sessional classes was to enable students to appropriately perform in their academic settings in the quickest and most effective ways. Finally, the findings suggest that creating a positive learning environment is as vital as making academic expectations and requirements explicit.

The above two studies conducted by Heron on her own and with Webster only look into the teachers' perspective, not taking account of students' voices. Heron's studies are carefully designed in terms of theoretical framework and methodology and they generate a rich interpretation of students' academic talk experience in HE. However, as the review above shows, her studies reviewed above only focus on EAP language classrooms and do not explore studies beyond these disciplinary boundaries. Therefore, it would be valuable to design an oracy-focused study across disciplines, considering the "cultural" differences between disciplines in other HE contexts.

Disciplinary differences and the oracy demands within

Although there is a body of literature that focuses on oracy and international students (Haworth, 2010; Doherty *et al.*, 2011; Kettle and May, 2012; Heron, 2018; Heron and Webster, 2018), most of this research has been conducted within a preparatory EAP context. There is little research on oracy set in mainstream disciplines. A discipline legitimates a particular form of knowledge that is subject to disciplinary rules and asks people who want to be recognised and valued within that particular field to master it (Danaher, Schirato and Webb, 2000) in order to make legitimate statements. Specifically, disciplines set a particular framework that is crucial for exploring and constructing academic knowledge in that domain (Yates *et al.*, 2017). Disciplines as socially constructed traditions of inquiry emerged in the 19th century and have been authorised within university institutional structures (Abbott, 2001). These scholarly disciplines are distinguished by their statements of concepts, theories and methodologies. All these statements identify a series of common features within a discipline (Yates *et al.*, 2017). To put it another way, there are important elements that differentiate disciplines. Teaching processes should be understood within and across disciplines where the disciplinary knowledge is transmitted or constructed under the influence of both the lecturers'/tutors' and students' beliefs, values and philosophies (Neumann, 2001, p. 137).

In short, disciplines are formed around a particular knowledge focus, with agreed theories and accepted methodologies in order to work and communicate professionally and

successfully. In this way, scholars must develop that particular disciplinary knowledge, which in turn can establish or produce disciplinary boundaries. All in all, disciplines have their own features and characteristics, which may give rise to differences in teaching and learning practices. This can be reflected in what is taught, what statements are legitimated in a discipline, how it is taught and how legitimate statements are made (Fry, Ketteridge and Marshall, 2015).

Based on the concept of disciplinary culture and the 'epistemological differences' in their approach to knowledge (Lindblom-Ylanne *et al.*, 2006), Becher (2001) divides disciplines into four categories: hard pure, hard applied, soft applied, and soft pure. Becher (2001) gives a definition of disciplinary "cultures": "By 'cultures' we refer to sets of taken-for-granted values, attitudes and ways of behaving, which are articulated through and reinforced by recurrent practices among a group of people in a given context" (p. 23). Additionally, according to Becher (2001), "academic cultures and disciplinary epistemology are inseparably intertwined" (p. 23). Therefore, it can be understood that a discipline has its own tacit cultural values and practices that are shared among people within its disciplinary community. A discipline is thus constructed by its shared cultural values, approaches and disciplinary knowledge.

Bernstein's (2000) concepts of classification help to understand the nature of disciplinary differences. Specifically, *classification* refers to the strength of the relations and boundaries between different disciplines and even within a discipline. Two disciplines can have strong similarities when the boundaries between them are weakened – for example, between a hard pure discipline and its cognate hard applied discipline, such as statistics and accounting – whereas two disciplines have sharper differences when the boundary between them is strong, as between a hard pure discipline and a soft pure discipline (Becher, 1994; Neumann, 2001; Neumann, Parry and Becher, 2002). A university lecturer can have some control (framing) over the weakening or strengthening of their disciplinary curriculum through their course design or pedagogic practices. This classification and framing set the power relationships between the teacher and students (Becher, 2001). A more detailed explanation and development of Bernstein's concepts of classification and framing will be presented in Chapter Three.

As is summarised by Lindblom-Ylanne et al. (2006), 'Pure hard' knowledge can be described as cumulative in nature and thus "teaching content is linear, straightforward and uncontentious" (p. 287), whereas "pure soft" knowledge is "holistic and qualitative in nature: and therefore, "teaching methods include more face-to-face class meetings and tutorial teaching including discussions and debates" (p. 287). This difference between the epistemologies of different disciplines is why in some disciplines – for example, accountancy – students are less evaluated based on language competence than on other skills, which can result in less satisfactory oracy competence among graduates (Benzie, 2010). For this reason, investigations of the nature and importance of oracy should consider disciplinary differences and the dispositions they seek to cultivate.

According to Neumann's (2001) study of disciplinary differences with respect to university teaching, knowledge of teaching is often taken for granted and university teachers tend to overlook the nature of teaching within their discipline-specific contexts. She points out that studies of teaching differences tend to be focused on understanding different academic levels or making comparisons across different types of institutions. More importantly, Neumann suggests that universities tend to ignore disciplinary differentiation with generic assessment regulations, which can largely jeopardise the learning goals and the requirements for a particular disciplinary knowledge. The relatively new focus on the role that disciplines play in shaping teaching has implications for understanding teaching practices. Neumann argues that relating student learning outcomes to disciplinary cultures is a new line of enquiry. Therefore, whether oracy matters as much in hard disciplines as it does in soft disciplines given the more problematic nature of knowledge in the latter is worth investigating, and it is potentially of great value to study pedagogy across disciplines with respect to understanding oracy demands in HE.

Based on the existing literature on teaching and learning, Neumann (2001) conducted a study looking into the nature of teaching, comparing teaching and learning processes as well as teaching outcomes across various disciplines in HE in Australia. Her research findings reveal a significant difference in terms of pedagogy with respect to hard and soft disciplines. Hard pure knowledge tends to be accumulative and quantitative in nature, while soft pure knowledge is holistic and qualitative (p. 136). In addition, applied

knowledge such as engineering and computing has its foundations in hard pure knowledge and generates products and techniques, while soft applied knowledge draws from soft pure knowledge and emphasises professional practice. Thus, hard disciplines place much more importance on cognitive goals like facts, principles and concepts, with an emphasis on applying theory to practice when it comes to hard applied disciplines. In contrast, soft disciplines require students to assemble a variety of knowledge and critical arguments. Soft disciplines require students to grasp a variety of alternatives and critical thinking abilities. As a result, Neumann suggests that soft pure disciplines demand more creative thinking and oracy to process ideas, whereas hard disciplines emphasise the competence necessary to apply methods and principles.

Neumann, Parry and Becher's (2002) study on teaching and learning within disciplinary contexts aims to develop a better understanding of teaching and learning across disciplines. According to Neumann et al., because of the differences in the nature of knowledge, the curriculum designs for hard and pure disciplines are also different. Courses in soft disciplines tend to be more loosely and openly structured, while courses for hard disciplines tend to be tightly structured, introducing closely related concepts and principles to establish the foundations of 'hard pure' knowledge. Also, the types of assessment used in hard and soft discipline courses reflect disciplinary differences. Neumann et al.'s findings suggest that hard applied disciplines emphasise knowledge application and integration. Skills in numerical calculation are required, and thus examinations are a common mode of assessment. In contrast, essays, oral presentations and oral examinations are more common in soft disciplines in order to check how sophisticated a student is in their understanding of a complicated field, as well as how well they judge and argue positions on controversial issues. The authors suggest that grading guidelines can seem ambiguous for soft disciplines because the expected practical skills are less explicit and difficult to precisely specify. While hard pure knowledge requires learners to exhibit logical reasoning and the ability to apply theory to practice, soft pure knowledge demands intellectual ideas, creative thinking and fluency of expression. Similarly, Lindblom-Ylanne et al.'s study (2006) aligns with Neumann's findings.

Doherty *et al.* (2011) conducted a study examining students' oral participation in classes in different disciplines. Informed by Bernstein's (2000) theory of pedagogy, curriculum and

assessment and MacLure 's (1988) distinction between “oracy as a competence” and “oracy for learning”, Doherty *et al.* (2011) asked whether what counts in assessment is supported by what counts in the curriculum and pedagogy. “Oracy as a competence” means oracy as an outcome of education, the idea being that students are equipped with good listening comprehension and oral skills for their learning and future jobs, whereas “oracy for learning” means oracy as a vehicle by which students accomplish learning through attentive listening and effective speaking. Doherty *et al.* (2011) conducted a cross-disciplinary study in Australia using qualitative research methods of classroom observations and interviews. They made a comparison between two first-year courses from two different disciplines. Course A belonged to soft applied disciplines, while Course B fell into hard applied disciplines. The courses were purposefully selected because they recruited high proportions of international students. Both courses were observed from the beginning until the end of the semester, with observation data collected by video-recordings of the first four weeks of lectures and tutorials.

In Doherty et al.’s study, Course B made its oracy requirements explicit in the course curriculum. Direct references to effective communication, teamwork, conflict resolution and industry-specific technical skills and knowledge could be found in the course outline. In addition, the oracy aspect of assessment was explicit, with specific criteria such as good teamwork and clear, logical oral presentation. Before the final assessment of the oral group presentations, each tutorial was tasked with activities designed to enhance students’ interaction for the explicit development of their communication skills, such as roleplays and hypothetical scenarios. As expected, students performed successfully during the final team presentation. However, although Course A had similar goals, it did not provide students with opportunities to practice during the tutorials or offer them necessary instruction or suggestions regarding professional communication skills. Based on its more implicit pedagogy and assessment design, Course A stimulated more talk outside the classroom, but without explicit curricular treatment. Doherty *et al*. argue that more talk may not necessarily be better talk. According to their description, the students in Course A did not have a clear idea of how to communicate effectively or how to negotiate, even though they were assessed on their teamwork and communication. It was therefore understandable why these groups failed to deliver good group oral presentations. These findings supported the argument that without an explicit pedagogical assistance on how to

oral skills focus on oracy and pedagogical assistance, students may not understand the requirements or expectations for the oral practice and therefore may fail the oral assessment. Therefore, the researchers argued for the need to offer explicit pedagogy and provide students with academic or professional assistance on oral tasks.

In Doherty *et al*.'s study, only teachers were interviewed; students were not asked for their accounts of their oral practice experience and challenges. Students' perceptions of the oracy demands and practices could have been investigated to provide important insights about their understanding of the oracy demands and their accounts of their oral performances. This study made me think that there are some further questions to look at. When looking into group discussion or teacher-student interaction, further questions could have been asked, such as: who is talking and who is not?; what do students have to know and do in order to engage in their oral tasks?; what assistance is offered?; and how can oracy competence be assessed as curricular learning?

Oracy demanded by the labour market

Another set of studies has suggested that oracy is not only crucial for academic learning, but also vital in the job market, making it a key skill for students' future careers. Blickley et al. (2013) report that in order to be adequately equipped for careers in practice, policy and science, undergraduates should be well aware of the importance of oracy, which is significant to their communication, teamwork, project management and ability to negotiate reports. Sterling *et al.* (2016) also emphasise that STEM professionals are facing "a growing need to communicate their science" (p. 87). Additionally, Ohnishi and Ford (2015) report that the quality of graduates' communication skills are a concern for most university departments. Such written and oral communication issues exist among both international students and domestic English-speaking students. It is also reported by Ohnishi and Ford (2015) that students' communication skills are often below employers' expectations and have become a core concern for employers. Some studies argue that oracy as a key life skill (Tailor, 2016) is often inadequately developed among undergraduate students (Benzie, 2010). This thesis wants to ask whether this is true in HE and how Chinese international students experience listening and speaking in class nowadays with respect to their lecturers'/tutors' oracy expectations. Benzie argues that hard applied disciplines like

accountancy, which places great importance on calculation, can emphasise mathematical skills rather than oral competence. Oracy, as a key life skill in economics, society and industry, is highly demanded (Cameron, 2000). Thus, this phenomenon of students having substandard oral competence may not only jeopardise the education sector but also, to a large extent, society more broadly. Therefore, enhancing students' oracy becomes a timely issue potentially of great value in terms of its pedagogic implications. This study will investigate whether different disciplines are engaging with questions of developing the appropriate professional communication skills.

Conclusion

This literature review presented in this chapter has considered the existing research on Chinese international students' performance in higher education, the importance of talk in classroom interactions and students' career preparation, and the role of disciplinary differences in shaping pedagogy. The relevant literature has informed my interest in researching oracy demands across disciplines with respect to Chinese international students' performance.

The existing literature on disciplines has highlighted the influence that specific disciplinary cultures and epistemologies can have on teaching. Although social constructivist pedagogy has prevailed in Western higher education, it seems questionable whether this social constructivism is a panacea for pedagogic practices, considering the disciplinary differences that have been emphasised in the literature. Social constructivism suggests that the nature of learning and teaching is social and interactional. As a result, interactive talk between the teacher and students and among students has been especially advocated by social constructivism in higher education. The existing literature on talk and interaction consistently highlights this advocacy for increasing chances for students' talk or classroom interactivity. However, the majority of these studies have been conducted in the context of EAP preparation or the educational field. Few studies have investigated students' oral participation in different disciplines. This study of oracy demands across disciplines seeks to fill that gap.

Bernstein's (2000) theory of classification and pedagogic discourse provides a pertinent theoretical lens through which to study teaching and learning in classes, which will allow me to understand the relationship between disciplines and the integral relations between teachers and students, and thus analyse classroom interactions. I will integrate Bernstein's concepts into my theoretical framework, which will be explained in Chapter Three, in the hope of achieving a better understanding of teaching and learning in different disciplines, and thus be able to consider whether the dominant learning theory of social constructivism has limitations. It is worth looking at whether and how different kinds of oracy-based activities, such as group discussions, dialogic teaching, teacher-questions-and-student-answers, student questions and so on, are used in different disciplines. As this review has shown, the existing literature on Chinese international students creates debates and tensions around the understanding of their verbal participation. Therefore, Chinese international students' participation is of particular interest with respect to the oracy demands in UK higher education. In this way, this doctoral study aims to contribute to the literature on the internationalised pedagogy of British HE.

To summarise, by identifying the gap in educational research on the oracy demands in higher education with respect to different disciplines, this doctoral thesis will explore Chinese students' participation in the oracy demands of two courses sampled in different disciplines. The following chapter will provide a theoretical framework in order to understand the teaching and learning processes, the dynamics of classroom interactions and the disciplinary relations. Equipped with a rigorous theoretical framework, I will be able to provide a thorough understanding of the identified educational issue.

Chapter 3 Theoretical framework

This chapter will develop a theoretical framework through which to understand teaching and learning in HE. It will build this framework based on Vygotsky's social constructivism and Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse. Social constructivism as a learning theory explains the social nature of learning and teaching processes. It highlights the importance of two-way interaction between the learner and the teacher, and thus strongly advocates for talk in interaction.

The Bernsteinian concept of pedagogic discourse reveals the internal relationship between the teacher and students and helps educators understand the different designs and enactments of pedagogic interaction. Bernstein's concept of "classification" characterises the boundaries between disciplines and within a discipline, while his concept of "framing" helps researchers understand whether a lecturer has a strong or weak control of the class. Therefore, Bernstein's concepts of classification and framing conceptualise the power relationship between the teacher and students in different pedagogic models. Finally, the concept of knowledge structures enables the researcher to consider the structure of curricular knowledge in a discipline.

Using the lenses of social constructivism and Bernsteinian theory, this thesis aims to explore and understand the relationship between pedagogy, discipline and oracy demands. The following section provides a rigorous understanding of these conceptual ideas and their applications to this study.

Social constructivism

As "an epistemological view of learning" (Akar, 2003, p. 29), constructivism is rooted in active engagement, problem-solving and critical thinking (Hanife Akar, 2003). "Constructivism is not a theory about teaching … it is a theory about knowledge and learning … the theory defines knowledge as temporary, developmental, socially and culturally mediated, and thus, non-objective" (Brooks and Brooks, 1993, p. vii). Specifically, knowledge is believed to be co-constructed by the teacher and students through interaction, which is considered to be essential to an effective process of teaching and

learning (Sims, Dobbs and Hand, 2001). Thus, constructivism emphasises the significance of creating opportunities for learners to form their own interpretations and arguments based on their prior knowledge. Both teacher and students work together to reach a satisfying learning result, and this dynamic process of teacher and students working together is a process of collaboration, typically accomplished through oral interaction.

Constructivism-based pedagogy emerged after Jean Piaget explicitly established a theory of cognitive constructivism in children's education (Akar, 2003). Through an analogy of biological evolution and adaptation (Akar, 2003), Piaget's cognitive constructivism theory views children's development as an active process of constructing knowledge (Verenikina, 2008). In contrast to Vygotsky's constructivism, which promotes social interaction as the site of learning (Vygotsky, 1978), Piaget's constructivism emphasises the individual work of constructing knowledge through analysing and interpreting experiences cognitively (Akar, 2003). In this way, Piaget argues that the traditional way of giving instructions directly may prevent students from discovering such knowledge cognitively. Therefore, Piaget's constructivism theory, which sees children as self-determined and learners capable of discovery, informed a new pedagogy that replaced traditional didactic instruction and advocated for a more student-centred teaching and learning approach knowledge (Verenikina, 2008).

However, Piaget's constructivism theory is limited to child development. Vygotsky's social constructivism is quite different to Piaget's cognitive constructivism and is more broadly applicable to learners of any age. Adapting Piaget's idea of children as active agents, Vygotsky proposes further that learning and development occur through a process of social interaction (Verenikina, 2008). In Piaget's constructivism, any kinds of social interaction merely aim to check a student's understanding. From Vygotsky's point of view, social interaction between teacher and students, or students and students, makes a significant contribution to learning and development. This is because the key to the development of higher mental functions is not in the individual, but rather in tools, like language, as well as in interpersonal relations (Kozulin, 1998). In other words, knowledge is not exclusively formed within the mind of the individual, but rather, it is constructed through social interactions in which students are exchanging, constructing and reconstructing ideas (Akar, 2003). Such interactions are mediated by language, which lays the foundation of individuals' conceptual understanding and boosts conceptual development (Vygotsky, 1978; Vygotsky,

1997; Jones and Brader-Araje, 2002). As a mediator of "higher order functions" – thinking, understanding, reasoning and arguing – language plays the role of a semiotic tool enabling a person's mental development. The higher mental functions that are mediated by language offer the greatest insights to educators. Education research has highlighted the importance of language in interactions, particularly in science and mathematics pedagogy (Jones and Brader-Araje, 2002; Mercer, 2006; National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, 2013).

As the UK National Research Council (1996) states in its standards on science education, oral and written capacity is important for students' science learning. This oral and written capacity should provoke students' thinking about existing knowledge and invite them to further explore and think about how to connect the knowledge they have gained with bigger ideas, other fields and the world beyond their classrooms. Interaction within collaborative groups is encouraged, through which students are able to work as a team and each student is engaged in sharing ideas and able to contribute to group reports. Oracy, with its particular value on talk as a tool for reasoning, enables group members to develop their mathematical understanding, reasoning and problem-solving (Mercer, 2006). In short, social constructivism emphasises the importance of language in learning and hence advocates language as a semiotic tool for constructing meaning and making sense of the world.

Like Piaget, Vygotsky's theory highlights student-centred and experiential learning through which knowledge is co-constructed. Because "learning is essentially social" (Lemke, 1990, p. 78), it requires not only the teacher but also the students to take part in the knowledge-building process. This theory, therefore, suggests that both the teacher and students work collaboratively in a supportive social context. To put it in another way, Vygotsky's constructivism proposes that classroom interaction results in effective teaching, learning and development (Vygotsky, 1978). Since Vygotsky understands both students and teachers as active agents in this dynamic social interaction, the quality of interaction between students and the teacher determines the process of learners' development. For this reason, many scholars believe that pedagogic interaction should be dialogical in nature and also cater to students' interests and needs (Tharp and Gallimore, 1988; Fleer, 1995; Bodrova and Leong, 1996, cited in Verenikina, 2008). This dialogical nature can only be achieved on the condition that the classroom's social order – that is the regulative

discourse in Bernstein's terms (2000) – allows such dynamics to occur. This point will be further developed in the following sections.

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

Vygotsky (1987) believes that learning and development are closely related, but that learning precedes development. He argues that to understand a learner's development, two developmental levels need to be acknowledged: the actual developmental level and the potential developmental level. According to Vygotsky, every learner's development is accomplished through a learning process that aims to map the gap between the actual developmental level and the potential developmental level. The distance between these two developmental levels is referred to as the zone of proximal development (ZPD):

> It is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86)

In other words, the ZPD is the gap between what a learner can do with assistance and without it. From this point of view, the ZPD reveals the collaborative and social nature of teaching, learning and development (Verenikina, 2008). As it has been outlined, language is the fundamental mediator of social interaction through which the process of teaching and learning is accomplished, and it is therefore of central importance in creating the ZPD. To summarise, Vygotsky's social constructivism emphasises the development of constructing knowledge via the interactive process "with language as the central tool and mediator for the negotiation of meaning" (Reusser and Pauli, 2015, p. 914). Therefore, interaction allows students to come into the ZPD, where the less able learner can manage the task with the help of a more capable peer (Asghar, 2010).

According to this social constructivist point of view, "knowledge cannot simply be transferred from teachers to children/students, it has to be conceived" (Akar, 2003, p. 29). Knowledge has to be constructed in relation to previous knowledge and experiences. Therefore, new knowledge comes into being in relation to the prior knowledge or experience. The integration of these knowledges is enabled by scaffolding (Shunk, 1996; Darling-Hammond, 2000). As defined by Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976), scaffolding is "the

process that enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task, or achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts" (p. 90). Moreover, its interactive essence is highlighted by Wood *et al.* (1976):

> An interactive system of exchange in which the tutor operates with an implicit theory of the learner's acts in order to recruit his attention, reduces degrees of freedom in the task to manageable limits, maintains 'direction' in the problem solving, marks critical features, controls frustration and demonstrates solutions when the learner can recognize them. (p. 99)

Van de Pol, Volman and Beishuizen (2010) point out three key features which enable scaffolding strictly related to map the ZPD: contingency, fading and transfer of responsibility (p. 33). To be specific, the teacher needs to adapt his/her support for students contingently according to the moment-to-moment situation. This support should be gradually withdrawn (faded) during the teaching process; by such fading, the teacher is able to pass the responsibility to his/her students, who in turn are encouraged to become independent.

Both Bruner *et al's* and Van de Pol *et al's* concepts of scaffolding exploit the power of the ZPD. As a result, with the concept of this scaffolding, we are able to understand its practical implications for pedagogy. Therefore, a social constructivist approach would encourage students to become active learning agents, and assisting them contingently is at the heart of the ZPD. Although more traditional teacher-centred pedagogy also offers scaffolding to students from the view of Vygotsky's constructivism (Bakker, Smit and Wegerif, 2015), it is dominantly accomplished through teacher talk and hence has been criticised for giving few opportunities for students' talk (Catt and Eke, 1995).

The Dialogic Nature of the ZPD

There are two significant characteristics of the ZPD (Akar, 2003). On one hand, individual development originates in social contexts. Accordingly, the higher mental functions (Vygotsky, 1997, p. xxv) are also developed in social activities (Hausfather, 1996). On the other hand, higher mental functions such as thinking, reasoning and understanding are developed via semiotics, which involves language, tools and signs to create and convey meaning. To put this another way, social constructivism argues that it is mostly via language

as the basic mediator that the reconstruction of meanings is accomplished. Language conveys the teacher's and students' thoughts and thus meanings are constructed or reconstructed between the teacher and students or among students. With the help of verbal language, the teacher and students are able to exchange and negotiate ideas, to argue and defend their own opinions, to build on and challenge others' claims, and to reflect on judgements (Reusser and Pauli, 2015). As is pointed out by Vygotsky (1992), language is first interpersonal (social), between the learner and the external context, before it becomes intrapersonal (individual). Therefore, from Vygotsky's point of view, knowing and learning are rooted in social interaction. Thus, constructivism-based pedagogy is of a socio-cultural nature. That is, a student's knowledge is bound to his/her personal experiences and is constructed through interaction mediated by language with others. "The interaction with a range of cultural tools is seen as central to the intellectual development as well as to becoming an effective member of the society" (Akar, 2003, p. 26). From this point of view, in class, students experience learning through productive interaction, by being able to talk, to share opinions, to express ideas or even to argue over an issue. To sum up, language is thoughts expressed verbally, and it is these verbal thoughts that manifest in the teacher talk and student talk that we can observe in class.

The section above has discussed the constructivist theory, which holds that through interactive participation, students are able to understand new concepts. Language is "the principle means developed by human beings both for coordinating joint activity and for co-constructing knowledge about the world" (Davies and Corson, 1997, p. xii). Thought and language are intimately related (Vygotsky, 1997; Alexander, 2017). While language is one of the key tools invented by humans to organise thinking, the way we think can formulate our language, and language in turn can affect our thinking. Furthermore, it is talk mediated by language that gives birth to new concepts from people's experience and knowledge (Blanck, 1990).

According to Alexander (2017), talk empowers students not only as thinkers but also as agents responsible for their own studying. He further argues that talk is crucial for both intellectual and social development, with a lifelong impact on learners. However, traditional teacher-centred or didactic teaching gives few talking opportunities and the IRE (initiation-response-evaluation) (Mehan, 1979) patterns typical in dialectic teaching are often pseudo-questions (questions to which the teacher already knows the answer)

(Cazden, 2001), which offer little room for deep thinking. Dialectic teaching refers to teaching that is predominantly managed through teacher talk with simple, short student answers, for example, teacher monologue and pseudo-questions. Therefore, many teacher-centred classrooms are characterised not only by little talk but also by a lack of "deeper layers of classroom talk" (Alexander, 2017, p. 17), for example, genuine questioning and meaningful feedback.

As Alexander argues, it is the quality of the talk that will determine how effective the teaching and learning can be. Dialogue is the key feature in a co-constructive classroom culture, as opposed to didactic teaching, in which students are all treated as solo learners (Reusser and Pauli, 2015). Dialogic classroom activity allows the construction of meaning between teacher and students and among students (Alexander, 2008; Heron, 2018). Alexander argues that such dialogue applies to the contexts of all disciplines and classroom interaction setups (whole class teaching, group/pairs work, one-to-one dialogue). Alexander (2017) also argues that the principles of dialogic teaching are all-pervasive, valuable not only for children's learning, but also for adults' learning. Similarly, Brooks and Brooks (1993) argue that dialogue is imperative for both mediating the collaborative learning and reflecting on one's own learning, with no limit to different discourses or age groups. Thus, constructivists should advocate the social and collaborative nature of learning and seek to build an interactive environment to accomplish this shared meaning-making process. Constructivist educators teach with visual and auditory modalities, make opportunities for dialogue and encourage creativity in a safe, supportive environment (Brooks and Brooks, 1999). In other words, "the active use of language or other symbolic tools are indicators of Vygotsky's social constructivism" (Akar, 2003, p. 28). From this perspective, dialogue is understood to be fundamental to teaching and learning (Davies and Corson, 1997, p. xii).

Vygotsky's social constructivism offers a theoretical basis with which to understand that learning is accomplished through an interactive process between the learner and the more capable guider. My study will explore whether and how social constructivism, especially its core concept of ZPD, is understood and applied among university lecturers/tutors working within different disciplines. Under social constructivist approaches, oracy has become increasingly important and valuable (Kettle and May, 2012; Alexander, 2017; Heron, 2018) because social constructivism strongly argues that learning is a social and interactive

process and it is through the interactions between the learner and the teacher that knowledge can be constructed.

Vygotsky's social constructivism and Bernsteinian theory

While Vygotsky's social constructivism reveals the relationship between learning and development and offers a generic understanding of a learner's process, Vygotsky's work was based on psychological tools and signs and does not offer a theoretical explanation of the different pedagogical designs psychological production within or across activities in institutions (Daniels, 2012). Daniels (2012) argued that the specific context of activity where the psychological tools structure and function was not explored in Vygotsky's social constructivism. In other words, Vygotsky's theory is limited with respect to offering an analytical framework in order to understand the social settings where learning activities take place. Daniels' (2012) work managed to bring Vygotsky's and Bernstein's work together, because he argued that it is Bernstein who recognised the need to analyse the social system of activities in which learning events happen and established a conceptual model in order to understand the construction of pedagogic discourse. His model enables an analysis to relate the macro-institutional level with the micro-interactional level and the internal rules of what counts as communicative competence (p. 50). Bernsteinian theory (2000) enables scholars to analyse different institutional modalities. His concept of pedagogic discourse, theorised in his concepts of instructional discourse and regulative discourse, allows researchers to think at both the interactional and the structural levels. These concepts will be further explained in the following sections "*Regulative discourse*" and "*Instructional discourse*". The theoretical language Bernstein established allows researchers to understand not only the moral order in class and institutions, but also the interactional level where knowledge is transmitted or constructed through teaching and learning (Daniels, 2012, 2016). Additionally, Bernsteinian theory offers a system of language that can describe power and control (Daniels, 2012). His concept of classification enables researchers to pay attention to the differences between disciplines and be aware of the boundaries between common sense knowledge and theoretical knowledge within a discipline. The concept of framing helps researchers to understand the degree of control between the teacher and students. A more detailed explanation will be given in the following sections, "*Classification*" and "*Framing*". The power and control defined in terms of classification and framing regulate social dynamics and thus result in certain kinds of pedagogic communication. Bernstein's theory enables scholars to analyse the social

dynamic of a class or institution. These complex micro and macro-level relations complement what Vygotsky's social constructivism has begun to explain in relation to learning processes in different contexts.

The next section considers how this study will understand the learning processes underpinning a classroom's discourse. It will outline Bernstein's pedagogic discourse theory to understand the relations between disciplines, the internal relationships between the teacher and students and the different dynamics of pedagogic discourse through which teaching and learning are manifested in listening and speaking, and education is accomplished.

Three message system – curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation

Basil Bernstein has been highly cited by sociologists for his well-known theory on curriculum and pedagogic discourse (Ivinson, Davies and Fitz, 2010). In Bernstein's view, discourse exists whenever there is a relationship between a teacher and a learner. A thorough development of pedagogic discourse will be presented in the section entitled "Pedagogic discourse". The key to Bernstein's theory is "formal educational knowledge" (Bernstein, 1971, 47), which is realised through the three 'message system' of "curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation" (p. 47):

> Curriculum defines what counts as valid knowledge, pedagogy defines what counts as a valid transmission of knowledge and evaluation defines what counts as a valid realization of this knowledge on the part of the taught. (p. 47)

With the concepts of classification and frames/framing, Bernstein analyses the underlying principles of education's three-message system – curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation – under different conditions. The concept of classification helps to understand the nature of a curriculum and how specialised the curriculum's disciplinary knowledge can be. With the concept of classification, we can argue that the discipline-specific context should be given

attention in terms of pedagogy. Social constructivism does not provide educationists with a thorough understanding of curriculum or disciplinary knowledge, whereas Bernstein's theory of classification helps to understand the neglected potential influence that a discipline can have on teaching and learning. The following section explains what classification means and why it asks us to pay attention to the disciplinary differences in curriculum knowledge.

Classification

According to Bernstein (2000), classification refers to "a defining attribute which constitutes a category but of the relations between categories.". More specifically:

> We have said that dominant power relations establish boundaries, that is relationships between boundaries, relationships between categories. The concept to translate power at the level of the individual must deal with relationships between boundaries and category representations of these. I am going to use the concept of classification to examine relationships between categories. (Bernstein, 2000, p. 6)

In short, it refers to the boundaries between different categories of knowledge (Case, 2011), for example, disciplinary knowledge. Later, Bernstein extended the idea of contents into categories more generally in order to enable classification to have a broader application. The concept of classification is thus used to examine relations between categories (Bernstein, 2000). Further, "whether these categories are between agencies, between agents, between discourses, between practices … classification refers to a defining attribute not of a category but of the relations between categories" (Bernstein, 2000, p. 6). Specifically, classification is strong when there is a sharp boundary between categories, and it is weak when the boundaries overlap and blur.

Therefore, classification can be used to conceptualise the boundaries between disciplines in HE. From this starting point, classification is the foundational concept for understanding

the underlying differences between disciplines. Moreover, classification not only exists between categories, but also within them. In other words, classification establishes both the intra-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary relations and the relations between academic and common-sense knowledge (Morais and Neves, 2018). Therefore, Bencher's four categories of disciplines – hard pure, hard applied, soft applied and soft pure – can be understood through the lens of classification. All disciplines in HE can be divided into either the "hard" or the "soft" categories, a difference which can be considered strongly classified. However, within a discipline, different areas may be more applied or purer within their own "hard" or "soft" category. This distinction between the "hard" and the "pure" can be understood from Bernstein's (2000) knowledge structure, which I will explain in more detail in the section entitled "The nature of the knowledge structure".

Apart from being intra- or inter-disciplinary relations, classification can also set relations between subjects, like the hierarchical boundaries between teacher and students and the more equal relations among students (Morais and Neves, 2018). Case (2011) argues that a traditional engineering curriculum is of strong classification, but the final year design project weakens the classification because students have to integrate academic knowledge with practical knowledge.

Framing

Another key concept for understanding the transmission of knowledge in educational settings is framing (frames). According to Bernstein (2000): "Framing regulates who controls what" (p. 12). Specifically, framing is about the social relations in a pedagogic setting and who controls the communication between categories. When the category of higher status has more control in the relationship, the framing is strong, whereas if the other category, for example, the category of students, has more control, then the framing is weak (Morais and Neves, 2018). Therefore, when we analyse teacher-students relationships, we can conclude that if the framing is strong, the teacher has more power in the transmission process, whereas when the framing is weak, students will have more control over the selection of knowledge, and the relationship between teacher and student appears more equal. Within the pedagogical context, the curriculum (the "what") is distinguished by the strength of classification and the pedagogy (the "how") is

distinguished by the strength of framing, and evaluation is the outcome of this interactive process. It is from this point of view that evaluation, is a result of both classification and frames.

Framing regulates two rules: “rules of social order” and “rules of discursive order” (Bernstein, 2000, 13). To be specific:

> Rules of social order refer to the forms that hierarchical relation take in the pedagogic relation and to expectations about conduct, character and manner… The rules of discursive order refer to selection, sequence, pacing and criteria of knowledge. (Bernstein, 2000, 13)

According to Bernstein, “the rules of social order” constitute the “regulative discourse”, and the “rules of discursive order” constitute the “instructional discourse” (Bernstein, 2000, 13). Based on this idea, instructional discourse refers to the process of the transmission of knowledge, while regulative discourse refers to the teacher-student relationship and their control of the content. Therefore, framing happens both in the regulative discourse and the instructional discourse. Based on the above definition, it can be inferred that, if the framing is strong in the instructional discourse, the teacher will talk more in class and therefore the class will have a high listening demand. On the other hand, if the framing is weak in the instructional discourse, it will be observed to have more student talk and thus the class will have a higher speaking demand. In terms of the regulative discourse, if the framing is strong, the social order between the teacher and students will be more hierarchical. If the framing is weak, the teacher-students relationship will be closer and friendlier.

Pedagogic discourse

In order to see how education processes through the micro-settings of pedagogic interaction, Bernstein established the concept of pedagogic discourse, which enables us to

analyse and understand classroom discourse through the relations between the lecturers/tutors and students and curriculum and its knowledge structure. From a Bernsteinian point of view, a pedagogic relationship between a teacher and (a) student(s) generates the pedagogic discourse (Lammers, 2013, p. 370). Bernstein (2000) argues that pedagogic discourse can function as a principle (p. 32). As Bernstein explains, "it is a principle where other discourses are appropriated and brought into a special relationship with each other, for the purpose of their selective transmission and acquisition" (p. 32). To be more specific, pedagogic discourse is a principle that embeds two discourses: an instructional discourse and a regulative discourse, and the instructional discourse is embedded in the dominant regulative discourse (Bernstein, 2000). This is because the regulative discourse sets the social and moral order of the classroom discourse. Therefore, "pedagogic discourse is the rule which leads to the embedding of one discourse in another, to create one text, to create one discourse" (p. 32). In other words, the pedagogic discourse, as a principle, creates the discourse of specialised abilities to be acquired: what is taught and learnt is embedded in the discourse that regulates social order (Buzzelli and Johnson, 2001). In terms of social order, for example, it could regulate understandings of whose turn it is to speak, when to speak and how strong the hierarchical relationship is between the teacher and students. Bernstein points out that regulative and instructional discourses are often separated as the 'moral and instructional' (Bernstein, 1990), but there is only one discourse (Bernstein, 2000). My understanding of this explanation is that to understand what happens in a classroom discourse or in the inter-relations within a classroom discourse, Bernstein conceptualises it via the concept of pedagogic discourse, which is constituted by instructional discourse embedded within regulative discourse. By conceptualising pedagogic discourse into instructional (ID) and regulative (RD) discourses, academics can understand both how (RD) and what (ID) teaching and learning happens in a classroom.

In other words, pedagogic discourse functions as a recontextualising principle. The concept of recontextualisation emphasises that a teacher has the freedom to select what to teach and inject a bit of their own understanding of that discipline. For instance, using Bernstein's own example of a physics class, pedagogic discourse serves as the vehicle to transfer physics from its own real field in science to become the curriculum of knowledge and skills

related to physics, and then into the classroom discourse, where teaching and learning about physics takes place. This process of how a lecturer/tutor chooses to teach and talk about physics is the process of recontextualising disciplinary knowledge (Bernstein, 2000; Lammers, 2013).

Therefore, the concept of pedagogic discourse (Bernstein, 2000) can be sharpened by understanding it as "a recontextualising principle" (p. 33) that "selectively appropriates, relocates, refocuses and relates other discourses to constitute its own order" (p. 33). Within these instructional and regulative discourses, recontextualising rules are able to transfer knowledge from its original filed into the pedagogic filed, where not only the "what" (disciplinary/curriculum knowledge) is taught and learnt, but also "how" to teach and learn the disciplinary/curriculum knowledge takes shape. From this view, through pedagogic discourse, lecturers/tutors carefully select an instructional discourse and a regulative discourse in order to successfully construct knowledge in their pedagogic design.

Lecturers/tutors, as the "transmitter" in class, have some degree of framing (control) of the classroom interactions. This framing, which allows knowledge to be passed between the teacher and students, impacts both the regulative and instructional discourses. If the framing is strong, the teacher will be dominant and in control of classroom discourse, whereas if the framing is weak, students will be empowered with more control and input to shape the pedagogic discourse.

Regulative discourse

Regulative discourse refers to the rules of social order, which reflect the hierarchical relations between teacher and students and results in the expected conduct, character and manner (Bernstein, 2000). According to Bernstein, the regulative discourse works as the moral discourse because it generates a moral regulation of the social order between transmission and acquisition (Bernstein, 1990; Buzzelli and Johnson, 2001) in terms of what a "good" teacher and "good" student do. In other words, the nature of the regulative

discourse establishes the relationship between the teacher and students, and among the students. Bernstein explains that any regulative discourse entails a model of teacher, student and their relation. This means the ideal students are those who are most receptive under a higher hierarchical relation, but they are those who are most interactive under a weaker framing of teacher-student relationship. When framing is strong in the regulative discourse, student talk will be less necessary because the ideal students are more likely to be conscientious, attentive, industrious and quiet. In contrast, when framing is weak, oral participation is highly desirable and students are expected to be interactive and productive. Therefore, I understand the regulative discourse as playing a vital role in terms of establishing a classroom social order which fits its pedagogic values and develops into certain pedagogic practices. As was indicated in the previous section, it is the regulative discourse that determines the dynamics of teaching and learning. For example, in order to have a student-centred class, an interactive and collaborative teacher-students relationship must be established to allow the dynamics of dialogic teaching to keep flowing. Once this type of the regulative discourse is built up by both the teacher and the students, it encourages a certain type of instructional discourse to be established.

Apart from establishing the social order, regulative discourse also carries instruction because it recontextualises the how, which is about the way in which the teacher gives instruction (Bernstein, 2000, p. 34). “The recontextualising principle not only selects the what but also the how of the theory of instruction” (Bernstein, 2000, p. 34-35). Therefore, the form of the oral interaction activities is under the influence of the regulative discourse. Specifically, oral activities such as group discussion, the IRE (initiate, respond, evaluation) pattern between teacher and students, teacher monologue, etc. are all different forms of interaction stemming from the regulative discourse.

Instructional discourse

The instructional discourse is embedded within the regulative discourse. According to Bernstein (2000), the instructional discourse refers to the rules of discursive order, which refers to selection of the communication, the sequencing, the pacing and criteria of the

knowledge. When framing is strong, the teacher will take more control of the transmission of knowledge on selection, sequence, pacing and criteria. In contrast to regulative discourse, which is related to "how", instructional discourse is about "what" can be transmitted in the classroom discourse. When framing is weak, students will have more control over the instructional discourse. For example, in terms of oracy in a weakly framed classroom, students will be empowered with addressing tasks and posing questions. Therefore, it is common to see students produce more talk through discussing, arguing and debating. However, in an oracy strongly-framed classroom, it is very unlikely to see students actively interact with each other because fewer classroom activities would be offered as the teacher dominates the talk.

Nature of knowledge structures

Hierarchical knowledge structure

Another important Bernsteinian theory relevant to this study is its modalities of knowledge structures. According to Bernstein (2000), knowledge can have either a hierarchical knowledge structure or a horizontal knowledge structure (p.161). Specifically, a hierarchical knowledge structure:

> attempts to create very general propositions and theories, which integrate knowledge at lower levels, and in this way shows underlying uniformities across an expanding range of apparently different phenomena. … motivated towards greater and greater integrating propositions, operating at more and more abstract levels. (p.161)

This reveals that knowledge of this structure is accumulated step by step. If we want to reach a higher level of knowledge, we need to have a solid foundation first. The discipline of mathematics adheres to this hierarchical knowledge structure (p. 163). Thus, disciplines like physics also have a hierarchical knowledge structure because, according to Yates *et al.* (2017), mathematics plays a vital role in physics because, although physical theories are constructed, they are tested by mathematics or verified with observations and experimentation. It is mathematics that is seen as one of the distinctive features that

distinguishes physics from other disciplines (Bailly and Longo, 2011). Mathematics serves especially as a type of language (Williams and Baxter, 1996; Cohrssen, Church and Tayler, 2014; Prediger and Pohler, 2015) for theoretical physics and, as a result, plays a primary role in terms of speaking about and describing the physical world (Yates *et al.*, 2017). As Becher (1990) argues, there is competition between theoretical physics and experimental physics over which contributes to a hierarchy where the more mathematical dominated physics is considered superior. Therefore, we may infer that when entering a physics knowledge-based class, there may be a lot of mathematical calculations or modelling. As a result, engineering science, whose knowledge is not only based on physics principles and demands a high level of maths, has a hierarchical knowledge structure. Similarly, other science knowledge, according to Bernstein (2000), has a hierarchical knowledge structure because it "attempts to create very general propositions and theories, which integrate knowledge at lower levels" (p. 161).

Horizontal knowledge structure

Another type of knowledge structure is the horizontal knowledge structure:

> Horizontal knowledge structure consists of a series of specialised languages with specialised modes of interrogation and criteria for the construction and circulation of texts. (p. 161)

Unlike physics, which heavily relies on mathematical language, observation or experimentations, the theories of soft disciplines of social science and humanities are constructed more via experiences and critical thinking. The knowledge of English literature, for example, specialises in criticism and in philosophy, so the knowledge consists of various inquiries (p. 161). Knowledge of social science consists of a series of alternative theories which compete with each other. Some of the concepts of those different theories may share similarities with or resist one another. Therefore, the disciplines of social science and humanities can be considered to have horizontal knowledge structures.

As we have seen from the meaning of classification and the nature of knowledge structures, we can conclude that the stronger the classification is, the more specialised the knowledge

is and the more theoretical the disciplinary language can be. On the other hand, if the classification is weaker, the knowledge tends to be less specialised and thus the language may be taught and learnt in more common daily life language.

Based on Bernsteinian theory, it can be inferred that the degree of classification varies across disciplines and the nature of the knowledge structures can also distinguish disciplines into “hard” or “soft”; therefore, the instructional discourse can vary across disciplines. From this starting point, this thesis will conduct an across disciplinary study on oracy demands in HE with particular interest in Chinese students’ participation, with the theoretical framework of constructivism and Bernstein’s theory of pedagogy as an analytical lens.

Conclusion

This chapter has aimed at integrating a theoretical framework for understanding the nature of teaching and learning in HE. It has looked at Vygotsky’s social constructivism, which provides a generic learning theory. Social constructivism tries to understand the nature of learning and teaching processes. It strongly argues that learning takes place when there is an effective interaction between the learner and a more capable person, for the more capable one will support the other one in coming to his/her potential level of understanding with respect to knowledge or problem-solving tasks. Therefore, this theory strongly advocates for talk and interaction in classes as this two-way communication can contribute to knowledge construction.

In contrast, Bernstein tries to understand the dynamics of classroom discourse by developing the concept of pedagogic discourse. It is through this pedagogic discourse that he explains how knowledge is constructed from its original site into the pedagogic context. The classification and framing help educators to understand how the degree of control flows in the pedagogic discourse. It gives people a conceptual idea that when the class is weakly framed, students are more interactive and active, whereas when the class is strongly framed, the class is quieter and listening is demanded. The classification exists

between categories, and thus if disciplines are of strong classification, there are sharp differences between these disciplinary categories. Similarly, the degree of classification indicates how hierarchical the relationship between the teacher and students is. Understandably, within a discipline, when the knowledge is combined with other disciplinary knowledge or blurred into more daily language, then the classification of this discipline is weakened. Finally, the nature of the knowledge structure divides the structure of knowledge into two, either horizontal or hierarchical. With these two categories of knowledge structure, a curriculum knowledge can be categorised as either more linear and cumulative or more constructed by alternatives.

While investigating how Chinese international students are performing in classes, why they participate in a particular way, whether university lecturers/tutors may apply Vygotsky's social constructivism in their pedagogy, and whether their classes are highly interactive, Bernstein's theoretical concepts of pedagogy will enable me to understand the interactional patterns in the classrooms while considering of the nature of disciplinary curriculum. With these two lenses of social constructivism and Bernsteinian theory, I have developed a rigorous understanding of the relationship between pedagogy, disciplines and their oracy demands. In the next chapter, I will introduce and develop my methodology for this thesis.

Chapter 4 Methodology

This chapter aims to link the methodological and theoretical framework from a meta-theoretical point of view, arguing for the need for adopting qualitative research methods to collect meaningful data through informed ethnography and understand it from the philosophical stance of critical realism. The first part of this chapter presents critical realism as the philosophical basis of the methodology of this thesis. The second part outlines the research design, detailing the means of the data collection and the pertinent ethical issues.

The appropriate methodology for any study is first and foremost foregrounded in questions of ontology and epistemology. This is because the methodology a research project adopts is "a reflection of the ontological and epistemological assumptions" (Arthur *et al.*, 2012, p. 16). Thus, methodology must align with the nature of the ontological and epistemological assumptions of the researcher and his/her study:

> Questions of method are secondary to questions of paradigm, which we define as the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways. (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 105)

A paradigm reflects people's worldview and their relationships with the world they live in (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Arthur *et al.*, 2012). Different perceptions of ontology, with its associated epistemology and methodological approach, constitute that particular paradigm. Therefore, different paradigms raise different ontological, epistemological, methodological and methods questions (Arthur et al, 2012). As a result, it is the researcher's position within "paradigms" that informs or shapes their particular research approach. When it comes to the differences between research methods, they "go beyond technique to basic assumptions" (Erickson, 1994, p. 54):

> Whatever terms one uses to characterize this divergence, it is apparent that major differences in purposes, value positions, and ontological and epistemological assumptions obtain. (Erickson, 1994, p. 54)

Therefore, the methodology that is adopted is always underpinned by the researcher's epistemological and ontological stances, which together build his or her own paradigm. For this project, I began by considering two paradigms: realism (positivism) and relativism (constructionism). Positivism emerged from philosopher Auguste Comte's work and was the prevalent paradigm until the mid-20th century. Positivism holds that there is only one truth – the truth – and thus knowledge of the world can be gained directly through observations and people can investigate the reality by studying a phenomenon via measurement. Thus, positivism has the tendency to depend only on testable theories. The limitation of this paradigm in gaining an in-depth understanding of social phenomena resulted in the development of constructionism in the mid-late 20th century. Constructionism sees the world, or reality, as being constructed through people's interpretations rather than as an objective reality, and thus it holds that there can be multiple truths. Between the poles of positivism and constructivism, critical realism occupies a middle ground, holding that there is an external reality out there that is independent of people's knowledge and interpretation. This external reality occurs when potentials and activities are intertwined in a complex social nexus, and thus it is hard to observe or interpret merely from studying an empirical layer. Therefore, in a "pedagogic nexus" (Hufton and Elliott, 2000), the critical realism paradigm is a good fit for this study in terms of gaining a better and deeper understanding of what is happening in the classroom and the reasons behind the phenomenon.

Critical realism

As critical realism holds the position that there is an external reality independent of humans' interpretations, it seeks a layered reality that goes from the "empirical" surface to the "actual" and then the deep "real" (Bhaskar, 2002). As natural scientists try to understand the empirical reality through universal laws – for example, the law of gravity – which enable scientists to understand the principles behind the patterned events, Bhaskar argues that

the domain of the real is greater than the field of the actual "which describes the pattern of events" (Bhaskar, 2002, p. 8), as well as the field of the empirical in which we can observe the pattern of events. Moreover, according to Bhaskar, the contribution of the breakthrough in ontology made by critical realism is the proposition that the world does not exist by depending on human beings, but rather it is structured, dynamic and totalising (Bhaskar, 2002). This is because the patterns of the world exist with or without agents as the world encompasses things, events and actual phenomena. As the next section will discuss, the ethnographic approach, as a way of knowing (Agar, 2006), enables researchers to adopt this holistic scope (Erickson, 1994).

Ethnography

The term ethnography first emerged in the field of anthropology in the 19th century to refer to a method that could descriptively represent people's practices within certain cultures (Erickson, 1994), but it was not until the last century that it became widely influential in the social sciences (Rees & Gatenby, 2014). Ethnography as a way of knowing (Agar, 2006) is not a method (Anderson-Levitt, 2006), but a philosophy of research (Anderson-Levitt, 2006) and epistemology (Green *et al*., 2012):

> Studying at first hand what people do and say in particular contexts. This usually involves fairly lengthy contact, through participant observation in relevant settings, and /or through relatively open-ended interviews designed to understand people's perspectives, perhaps complemented by the study of various sorts of documents official, publicly available, or personal (Hammersley, 2006, p. 4).

In the early years, ethnographers worked through a descriptive approach which emphasised "factual accuracy and holistic scope" (Erickson, 1994, p. 45). The researcher investigated as an outsider, aiming to document accurate and objective descriptions of facts without the people observed being aware that a study was taking place (Erickson, 1994). It was only when Malinowski (1922) did his fieldwork that the notion of looking from the insider's point of view was foregrounded, as Malinowski argued that any description offered should also "grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, his vision of his world" (1922, p. 25). Therefore, seeing from the perspectives of those observed and adding interpretations of the meanings of their daily actions from their own point of views is the

contribution made by Malinowski to ethnographic approaches (Erickson, 1994). However, the validity of the locals' feedback on their attitudes, values, behaviours and so on should not be treated as being "beyond all possible doubt, as a privileged source of information, there is no reason to dismiss them as of no value at all or even to treat them as of value only as displaces of perspectives or discourse strategies" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p. 141). Also, in both participant observation and interviews, the effects caused by the research must also be taken into account. This is because social researchers are part of the social context, and thus rapport and trust between the ethnographic researcher and the interviewers needs to be built (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995).

Being holistic is the nature of ethnography (Erickson, 1994). With interviews added to participant observation, the insider's view can be provided so as to give the researcher a better understanding of the particular culture. Although interviewees' attitudes, feelings and values are subjective, they should neither be dismissed nor privileged as a source of information. Moreover, a good rapport and trust should be built up between participants and the research in order to minimise the ethnographer's effects.

Critical realism and ethnography

A framework shaped by positivism or naturalism is not adequate for the ethnographic approach. This is because both of them neglect the reflexivity according to which the researcher belongs to the part of the social world he or she investigates, and researchers cannot escape from relying on common-sense knowledge and methods of investigation (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). Since all social research is grounded in participant observation, ethnographers not only act in the social world but also are capable of reflecting upon themselves and their actions as objects. While there are many different layers of cultural knowledge within any social world and either positivism or naturalism is limited in structuring an adequate framework, critical realism allows the ethnographic researcher to dig from the empirical surface into the actual and the 'real' layers. Critical realism and ethnography can have a mutually beneficial relationship (Rees and Gatenby, 2014). According to Porter, this contention can be solved with critical realism, through which ethnographic enquiry is underpinned with "a robust and convincing conception of social structure" (Rees and Gatenby, 2014, p. 3). Therefore, grounded in a critical realist

ontology, an ethnographic approach can illuminate a deeper understanding of particular phenomena.

Critique of the ethnographer's position in postmodernist philosophy of science also raises concern about the ethnographer's paradigm, in which they are the authority, which presumes Western superiority and entails taking more time to understand the Orient based on their prior conception (Porter, 2002). In fact, postmodernism allows Western ethnographers little or no confidence to presume that "one interpretation of the social world can claim epistemological superiority over any other" (Rees and Gatenby, 2014, p. 4). As Porter argues, without reflections of social reality, the ethnographic approach under this paradigm stance would be in vain:

> If absolute uncertainty and relativism are accepted, there is little else for ethnographers to say about the social world, for what they say can claim no superiority in terms of adequacy over that which anyone else says. (Porter, 2002, p. 59)

Sense experience may not be capable of directly accessing the underlying structures and mechanisms – for example, what we cannot see at the empirical layer – so a process of retroduction, which is brought up in critical realism, should be theoretically constructed and modelled (Rees and Gatenby, 2014). According to Rees and Gatenby (2014) retroduction means to understand patterns of interactions from the surface to the deep potential causes. Ethnography, because of its abductive/retroductive reasoning process (Kaplan, 1964), involving direct, detailed and continued contact with individuals across time, is fits ideally with critical realist ontology. Therefore, ethnography needs to look beyond reality, and critical realism enables ethnographic researchers because critical realism establishes a philosophical basis in which the ontology is of a social world independent of our knowledge, and the epistemology argues that this world is knowable. As the ethnographic approach applies to different sociocultural contexts, including classrooms, in which a situated teaching-learning process takes place over time (Dixon *et al.*, 1992), classroom ethnography has been frequently applied in investigating classroom discourse ranging from schooling contexts (Watson-Gegeo, 1988, 1997, Hammersley, 1990, 2006; Atkinson and Hammersley, 1998) to higher education (Lucas, 2012) and from second

language research (Mackey and Gass, 2005) to various disciplinary studies (Brown, Reveles and Kelly, 2004; Avellar Freitas, Lucia Castanheira and Messias, 2007).

Ethnography of communication

Ethnography of communication asks questions such as, "what does a speaker need to know to communicate appropriately within a particular speech community, and how does he or she learn to do so?" (Saville-Troike, 2003, p. 2). The answer to this first question and the skill needed to achieve it is communicative competence (Saville-Troike, 2003). Specifically, communicative competence relates to being capable of applying the language code and communicating appropriately in any given circumstances. Apart from that, it requires that the speaker should have the social and cultural knowledge which is presumed for interpreting linguistic forms. Therefore, communicative competence reflects the ability of knowing who may or may not speak in any given situation, to whom one may talk, when to talk and when to choose to be silent. Silence as a category of the communicative system is one of the strongest control forms in the social and cultural context (Saville-Troike, 2003, p. 34). This concept of communicative competence aligns with the concept of oracy, which is "the ability to use the oral skills of speaking and listening" (Wilkinson, 1965, p. 13).

In addition, the speech community, as the focus of the ethnography of communication, is a way of patterning the communication and making it into a system of communicative events which also interact with other systems of culture. Here, "pattern is culture" (Saville-Troike, 2003, p. 11); if culture is conceived "as pattern that gives meaning to social acts and entities" (Du and John, 2000, p. 94), then it can be observed how social actors perform with patterned speaking so as to generate patterned cultural action (Saville-Troike, 2003). As Saville-Troike argues, doing ethnography in terms of communication in other cultures essentially requires fieldwork that includes observing, interviewing, engaging in activities and testifying to the validity of the researcher's understanding against the values of the locals. Therefore, when conducting research, the researcher must be aware of and open to the possibility that the pattern of behaviour may not be what is expected by him/her based on his/her prior knowledge or presumptions. In other words, "the key to successful participant-observation is freeing oneself as much as humanly possible from the filter of one's own cultural experience" (p. 97). This requires a perspective of cultural relativism

that enables the researcher to acknowledge possible cultural differences and interpret others with objectivity and sensitivity (Saville-Troike, 2003).

Classroom ethnography

The classroom is a cultural setting in which individuals construct patterned interaction with each other over time (Dixon *et al.*, 1992; Freitas *et al*., 2007). Ethnography as a recursive, iterative and abductive process is ideally suited to investigate the patterning of moment to moment interaction (Kaplan, 1964). Additionally, a common goal – to learn from the people/insiders what counts as cultural knowledge (insider meanings) – is shared by ethnographers (Green, *et al.*, 2012). Similarly, Agar (2006) conceptualises ethnography as a non-linear enquiry which is iterative, recursive and abductive in logic. This non-linear system allows ethnographers to come to understand the practices and predilections of a particular group of people while they are engaging in the daily events of that community (Green *et al.*, 2012). In particular, social order is constructed and negotiated; in other words, "we create our world with words" (Vaughan, 2012, p. 276). Also, language and culture are both interdependent and indispensable to each other, because "language is imbued with culture and culture is constructed through language-in-use" (Green *et al.*, 2012, p. 310). Therefore, the 'langua-cultures' of a particular group of individuals socially constructs their particular cultural knowledge (Agar, 2006). As a result, in second language research, when classroom ethnographers sit in a classroom, they describe and interpret the classroom culture, especially a group's communicative behaviour (Johnson, 1992), to report an emic (the insiders' perceptions) description of the cultural practices generated by the observed insiders (Ramanathan and Atkinson, 1999). Classroom ethnographers ask questions:

> to acknowledge the dynamic processes involved in constructing common knowledge within social groups and through a process of acculturation, knowledge in classrooms and other social spaces is constructed against a tapestry of cultural knowledge develop previously by members in other social contexts both in and out of schools. (Green et al, 2012 p. 310)

Therefore, ethnography as epistemology, a way of knowing, enables researchers to explore common cultural knowledge of a classroom through "a non-linear, abductive, iterative and

recursive logic-in-use" (Green et al, 2012, p. 310), and thus generates solid explanations for social phenomena including patterns of practice, social orders, roles and relationships (Green et al, 2012). Given the previously identified relationship between critical realist ontology and ethnographic epistemology, employing an ethnographic approach allows us to see what cannot be seen at the empirical level (Dixon *et al.*, 1992; Doherty, 2015) and thus to make the invisible visible.

The common methods applied to classroom ethnography are classroom observations, interviews, artefacts and documents. Classroom observations are usually and should be supplemented with interviews in order to understand the underpinning principles of the organisation of social interactions and the meaning from the participants' perspectives in response to their actions (Doherty, 2015). This is because to investigate a particular action is more than just to analyse the transcripts of classroom talk (Hammersley, 1990). Similar to Hammersely's argument, the participation of ethnographic researchers might change the nature of the event, and thus they need to have the awareness of how supplements of interviews can be employed to understand the observed patterns, and the influence of their role on the data collection must also be considered (Mackey & Gass, 2005).

When entering a classroom, the ethnographer tries to gain the knowledge of insiders through asking questions that explore the dynamic process of interaction in the course of constructing "common cultural knowledge" (Green *et al.,* 2012, p. 310). Therefore, researchers are able to foreground explanations and theory for the classroom phenomena in which patterns of practice, roles and relationships are generated. For example, in the ethnography classroom approach, asking questions about what is happening in that context, who accomplished what in what ways, in what circumstances, with what purpose and so on (Green, *et al.,* 2012) is a common way to get to know the insiders' attitudes and to obtain the cultural knowledge of that particular classroom. Moreover, there are four principles summarised as guidance for ethnographers to conduct their research: "ethnography as a non-linear system"; "leaving aside ethnocentrism"; "identifying boundaries of what is happening"; and "building connections" (Green, *et al.,* 2012, p. 312-314). Specifically, ethnographers need to identify the patterns of the classroom's cultural practices by leaving aside their preconceptions of the classroom culture. After the data has

been collected, the ethnographer should relate it to existing knowledge on other aspects of the whole of the culture or related studies done in other cultures (Heath, 1982).

Because of its scope and focus on classroom interactions, this thesis will adopt the classroom ethnography of communication which perceives that the nature of teaching and learning processes is sociocultural and acknowledges participants' knowledge of their own practices, and thus understands classroom interaction via a holistic analysis (Watson-Gegeo, 1997). This ethnography is further supported by a critical realist lens which enables the researcher to uncover the multiple layers of interactions in class and thus to dig the 'real' of patterns and thus help to understand the oracy demands and students' verbal participation.

For this study, informed by the ethnography of communication, I observed three courses that were selected from both "hard" and "soft" disciplines based on Becher's (1989) categories of disciplines. Each of these courses had large enrolments of Chinese international students. Course A represented "soft" (applied) disciplines, and Course B represented "hard" (applied) disciplines, with Course C integrating emphases on communication and teamwork into Course B. The following section details why observations are important.

Observation

Observation as the "fundamental base of all research methods" (Adler and Adler, 1994, p. 389) has prevailed in the social and behavioural sciences. This is because observation as a research method of generating data immerses the researcher in their particular researched context, and thus enables them to systematically observe from different dimensions of that context where interactions, relationships and actions take shape (Mason, 1996). Video-recorded observation of interactive behaviour is often employed, and it can be helpful for participation observation. This method precisely records every moment and can be replayed to allow the communicative discourse to be analysed. However, the camera

comes with limits in terms of focus and scope (Saville-Troike, 2003), and in addition, this view of perception can only be sufficiently acknowledged in a more holistic context. Also, as Saville-Trioke further points out, the priority of what should be observed and the aims of research must be decided by the researcher, given the enormous range of settings for observation. When doing an educational study, sometimes the researcher needs to go beyond the limit of observation on the classroom setting and look from the larger social-cultural context of communication. This point of view is also compatible with the critical realism ontology because researchers need to be aware of not only what is happening at the superficial empirical level of reality, but they also need to dig into the actual and the real domain of the reality, which rules and generates the pattern of the empirical.

The three courses I observed were all audio-recorded without a camera. I developed a classroom observation proforma based on Bernstein's (2000) regulative discourse and instructional discourse for observational notes (see Table 4.1 below). Because of the time required for ethical procedures, I missed the first few classes in the semester, but I managed to observe every class in the second half of the semester. While observing classes, I took quick notes in my proforma, which I enriched them with more details I could remember immediately when I got home. The following section is about the importance of doing interviews and why I also employed stimulated recall interviews.

Table 4.1: Class observation proforma

Time	**Instructional discourse** **(The what)**	**Regulative discourse** **(The how)**	**Notes** **(How do Chinese international students and L1 students perform?)**
Note when the topic or activity shifts.	Topic 1: What is the topic? What is the stage of the lesson? What is the teacher talking about? How does the teacher shift the topic?	How is the learning designed? How is the teacher talking? When does a student talk? When do students talk? (group discussion/work) Who sets the topic? How is the class going?	Eg: *Students tend to group according their ethnic group* Group one (all L1 students) started to talk instantly when Stephanie asked them to have discussion. (17:15)

	Topic 2:	Eg: *Activity 1: teacher asks students questions* *Activity 2: calculation on board* *Activity 3: group/pair work*	Chinese student H voluntarily gave answers. (17:45)

Interviews and stimulated recall interviews

Interviews are frequently employed in qualitative research because of the advantages of interviews in enabling researchers into the reality of participants' experiences and attitudes, and also in overcoming the gap brought by both space and time (Perakyla and Ruusuvuori, 1994). The key to conducting ethnographic interviews is not to ask questions that are predetermined (Saville-Troike, 2003). In other words, ethnographic interviews should be open-ended with few presumptions, minimising the effects caused by the potential sources of bias. Therefore, as Saville-Troike further argues, it is crucial for ethnographers to accept new ideas, information and patterns that occur while interviewing, as well as to be aware of the fact that the "real" culture reflected from the interviewees' views can be different from the preconceived "ideal" culture. Moreover, ethnographers should approach their participants' perception by asking interview questions appropriately. Semi-structured interviews allow for this kind of plan by enabling a larger degree of flexibility than structured interviews (Gray, 2009). This flexibility is especially important in terms of investigating the features and patterns of communication. Therefore, semi-structured interviews give the researcher room to investigate the patterns of communication and those particular moments when the teacher and students talk. For this study, I interviewed seven students from each discipline – seven students in Course A, five students in Course B and two students in Course C – so in total I interviewed 14 students. All the student interviews were conducted near the end of the courses. I had two interviews with each course's lecturer/tutor: one conducted at the beginning of my observation period and the other at the end of course. Courses B and C were taught by the same lecturer/tutor, Bruce, and thus he was interviewed twice, while for Course A I interviewed the lecturer/tutor, Stephanie.

Additionally, stimulated recall has often been adopted for interviews in the field of education. The stimulated recall interview method is classified as an introspective methodological tool (Gass and Mackey, 2017). According to Gass & Mackey (2017), introspection is similar to the way one observes events of the external world; one is also capable of observing what happens in their consciousness to understand why they performed in a particular way in a particular moment. An introspective method was initially adopted by Bloom (1954) during his observation of students' thoughts in lectures and discussions. Bloom states:

> The subject may be enabled to relive an original situation with vividness and accuracy if he is presented with a large number of the cues or stimuli which occurred during the original situation. (Bloom, 1953, p. 161)

Recall accuracy is the vital assumption for stimulated recall (Gass and Mackey, 2017), as stimulated recall is presumed to "jog memories" and enable interviewees to answer "I did" rather than "I might have done" (Dempsey, 2010, p. 350). Bloom's findings suggest that the shorter the period of time after the event is (usually within 48 hours), the more accurate the recall can be estimated to be (95 percent). Furthermore, stimulated recall encourages and enables participants to reveal their attitudes by reflecting on particular excerpts (Heron, 2018). Teachers can be asked to explain and reflect on their decision-making and interactive thoughts (Gass & Mackey, 2017). Thus, stimulated recall is often employed as a supplementary tool for other methods in order to do further investigation (Gass & Mackey, 2017). For example, it can reveal values that may not be evident in observations (Dippold, 2014; Heron, 2018). Therefore, as an effective tool for teaching, training and evaluation (Gass & Mackey, 2017), stimulated recall interviews have been used for both investigating teachers' attitudes and thoughts (Keith, 1988; Doherty and Singh, 2007; Doherty *et al.*, 2011; Heron, 2018; Heron and Webster, 2018) and those of students (Bloom, 1953). As an example, I used stimulated recall during my interviews with Course A's lecturer/tutor in order to elicit her explanation for those interesting moments when she used humour.

Ethical considerations

Whenever we conduct research that recruits participants, we need to consider the potential ethical issues. What does 'ethical' mean, and what is ethics? According to Hammersley & Traianou (2012, p. 3), 'ethical' means "what is good or right" as opposed to "the unethical – what is bad or wrong". Therefore, ethics is "the study of what researchers ought and ought not to do, and how this should be decided" (p. 2). In other words, ethics for social research means "the set of ethical principles that should be taken into account when doing social research", that is, "the set of ethical principles held by researchers" (p. 2).

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical rules for research at the University of Glasgow, and specific decisions were made according to the particular situation for the sake of generating trustworthy outcomes. Plain language statements and consent forms for the lecturers/tutors and students were carefully made with the above principles in mind. The detailed processes for how I ensured the confidentiality of my participants are presented in the following section on "anonymity and confidentiality". All the documents, such as the plain language statements, consent forms, observation proforma, interview themes and ethical application forms, were sent to the University of Glasgow's College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee for approval. Ethical approval was granted by the Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee before data could be collected. Very soon, the heads of the two Schools in which I conducted my research gave me their consent. Having obtained the approval of the heads of the school, I started to contact lecturers. The course leader and all other lecturers/tutors gave their consent for me to observe Course A's lectures. Stephanie (participant pseudonym), one of the guest lecturers and tutor, allowed me to attend and observe her tutorials and thus all my tutorial data came from her tutorial group. Bruce, the lecturer and tutor for Course B and Course C, allowed me to do my research in his lectures and tutorials. When I first entered Stephanie's and Bruce's class, I distributed the plain language statement and consent form to every student in class. All students in the observed tutorials gave their consent allowing me to be in their class and to record their class. I selected my student interviewees from those students who gave their consent to be interviewed. Those students who did not circle the option for being interviewed were not considered to be my interviewees. Near the end of the course, I established a convenient date and place with my participants for our interviews. The place

where the interviews took place was chosen by the students, either in a classroom or in the library's private study room. The place for teacher interviews were all conducted in lecturers'/tutors' office for their convenience.

Anonymity and confidentiality

Offering participants the opportunity to protect their identity is a key element of research ethics (Oliver, 2000). If the participants' identities are disclosed, then they may be anxious about revealing their genuine opinions, especially on sensitive issues. Another advantage of anonymity is the protection of participants whose ideas will be presented in the research report. As Oliver notes (2010), it is not fair for the people who are not involved in the research to be identified merely because they are mentioned during the discussion or interviews. A way to anonymise the participants' identities is through deidentifying, for example, replacing them with numbers, pseudonyms or letters. Therefore, in my research I have used deidentification to replace my participants' real names so as to remove concerns and anxiety on the part of the participants, and I have also protected the identities of any other individuals who were mentioned during the discussions or interviews. Also, I employed a coded list with the real names and coded names of each individual during my analysis. Once this thesis is completed, the coded list will be destroyed in line with the University of Glasgow's policy on data retention.

The point of confidentiality is to protect the privacy of the participants involved in the research. Before I entered a classroom or conducted an interview, I obtained the consent of the participants first, as was mentioned above. I drafted two explicit plain language statements: one for the lecturers and tutors and the other for students in the tutorials I observed. The statements provided an introduction to my research and let the participants know how I was to conduct it. In the consent forms, it was made clear who could access the data, how these data would be securely stored and may be used, where the research may be published, and when the data will be destroyed. The reason for doing this is that participants have the right to know what will happen to the data later on and to be assured that their identities will remain anonymous (Oliver, 2000).

Furthermore, it is desirable that the "social ecology" of the study (Miller *et al.*, 2012, p. 85) involve a minimal amount of intrusion and thus data should be collected "in as naturalistic a setting as possible". That is also why a good rapport in terms of trust between the researcher and the researched is needed, one which can be achieved through care (Miller *et al.*, 2012) and consideration for the participants. Thus, the participants were given the option of choosing the places where the interviews were to take place, and a coffee voucher was offered as a token of appreciation. If the interviewees shared the same mother tongue as me, interviews were conducted in our first language--Mandarin. All the participants were also informed that their participation was completely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the research at any time without giving reasons. In order to create a relaxed environment, I also tried to build up a good relationship with my participants from the selected tutorials after the classroom observations.

In conclusion, ethical issues are vital as they can determine the success or failure of a study and therefore need to be well prepared before, while and after collecting data when adopting the ethnographic approach.

Trustworthiness of my data analysis

Although the criteria of reliability and validity are used to assess quantitative research in the positivist paradigm, these two concepts have also been widely explored in other kinds of research (Golafshani, 2003). Reliability refers to "The extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable" (Joppe, 2000, p. 1). Validity refers to "whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are" (Joppe, 2000, p. 1). In qualitative research, trustworthiness of research is considered vital (Golafshani, 2003), because trustworthiness of a qualitative study is fundamentally the discussion of validity and reliability (Seale, 1999). As Strauss and Corbin (1990) argue, good social science demands a redefinition of these concepts when it considering the paradigm of a qualitative research. The understanding of revealing truth through measurement of variables, and that the reliability and validity of such measurements must be considered is then replaced by the concept of

trustworthiness (Mishler, 2000). Trustworthiness is defined as the rigorousness of a research that is defensible, confident and well established with respect to its findings (Golafshani, 2003). With a high degree of trustworthiness, qualitative research can be “defensible”(Johnson, 1997, p. 282) and s researchers can have confidence in the findings (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). While the credibility of quantitative research relies on “instrument construction” (Golafshani, 2003, p. 601), the credibility of qualitative studies depends on the researcher, because “the researcher is the instrument" (Patton, 2002, p. 14). Therefore, the credibility of a qualitative study refers to the researcher’s ability and effort (Golafshani, 2003). This doctoral research is trustworthy considering the careful process of collecting data and the data analysis. For example, I reviewed and checked the codes that I used in the thematic analysis. Data across the different sets of data I collected such as interview student data, observational data and interview teacher data were reviewed. I asked follow up questions to clarify their answers so as to ensure that my understanding was accurate. I will detail some of these processes in the following sections and the following section offers a detailed demonstration of my study’s trustworthiness in data analysis.

Data analysis procedure

For data analysis, this study employed thematic analysis, which is informed by Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phases of thematic approach. These six phases are: getting familiarised with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and renaming themes and producing the report (Braun and Clarke, 2006). It is via this step-by-step process that the thematic analysis approach, as a research method, manages to identify, analyse and explain patterns within a set of data (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

In this context, the initial work of transcription was an active process of engaging with my data. Transcription is “theoretical, selective, interpretive, and representational” (Davidson, 2009). Researchers have to make choices (Kvale, 1996), because transcription is not a rigid mechanical selection, but rather, choices are purposefully made by researchers relating to their theoretical stances (Jaffe, 2007). All the interviews were transcribed manually by myself. All 18 interviews amounting to 10 hours (see Table 4. 1) were transcribed with each interview transcribed from the beginning of the interview conversation to the end. The transcribed interviews were punctuated as written text (See Appendix 11). For the recording of classes, I only transcribed two tutorials (two hours in total) of Course A and Course B, because the focus of this study is to find out why Chinese international students

were performing in particular ways, rather than investigating the classroom interactions, which aligns with Jaffe's (2007) guidance in the selection of data for transcription. While observing classes, I highlighted or made a note besides pertinent moments, especially when the lecturer/tutor was emphasizing a certain point (See Appendix 12). In addition, with an ethnographic approach, using a detailed proforma for making notes of what happened in class and listening to the recording of the tutorial, I could notice and review the typical interactional patterns in these classes, for example, how Stephanie repeatedly emphasized: "There's no right or wrong answers" (See Appendix 12 in red) in every class, or the fluent interaction between Stephanie and L1 students answering her questions by taking turns spontaneously. Such repetitive teacher comments or typical interactional patterns were highlighted in my interviews and the explanation or understanding of the interactional patterns given by the lecturers/tutors or students were then highlighted in my transcripts. In my data analysis process, I also drew on a thematic analysis approach whereby the data collected for this study has been thematically analysed through transcribing, coding and constructing theoretical (deductive) themes. This mode of theoretical analysis has been widely used for large sets of data and interpretations while maintaining the original contexts (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2014).

Following Braun and Clarke's six steps of thematic analysis approach, I first familiarised myself with the data by reading the transcripts through several times so that I could notice any interesting parts and important accounts on particular performances or interaction patterns. I then used Nvivo software to create and apply codes that were based on my interview questions, research questions and the key points that could be drawn from my data. With these codes, I started to derive themes deductively supported by my theoretical lens. After reviewing, defining and redefining these themes, I started to report this analysis, which will be presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven.

Data	**Interviews**	**Observations**
Course A	5.5 hours, 9 interviews (7 student interviews, 30 minutes on average + 2 teacher interviews, 1 hour each)	10 hours (5 lectures + 5 tutorials)

Course B	3.5 hours, 7 interviews (5 student interviews, 30 minutes on average, + 2 teacher interviews, 30 minutes each)	13 hours (8 lectures + 5 tutorials)
Course C	1 hour, 2 interviews (2 student interviews)	2 hours (3 student practice presentations of 20 minutes each + 3 student meetings of 20 minutes each)
Total	**10 hours, 18 interviews**	**25 hours, 29 observations**

Table 4. 2 The data set.

Positionality

Reviewing how the connection and communication between the researcher and the participants within the context of a study is a crucial process for qualitative research (Burawoy, 1998). As a critical realist ethnographer, I would like to reflect how I position myself in my own study. Before I started to observe the tutorials of Course A and Course B and the teamwork of Course C, I was briefly introduced by Stephanie and Bruce in front the class, after distributing the plain language statement and the consent form to every student. In both Stephanie and Bruce's courses, after their short introduction about why I was beginning to attend lectures and tutorials and the benefit of my study for improving teaching and learning, I also introduced myself with a big smile on the podium, telling the students who am I; what my study was; and how my study had no relation to their final score and wouldn't affect their assessment. These pre-observation introductions were very helpful with respect to eliminate students' confusion and nerves and to build rapport and trust (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995) between me and my participants at the very beginning of my research. I was also aware that the introduction of myself standing on the podium would generate power dynamics, because by allowing me in the classes, the tutors hoped to have a better understanding of their students and what they might do to improving their teaching. Whereas for the students, some of them might have felt nervous at the beginning as a pair of researching eyes were looking at them, especially in the first observed class; however, during the classes, I joined them in the student rows so I could be taking on their perspective. From this position, quite often I could hear non-curriculum content related student chats in small voice volume, or seeing some students occasionally texting messages or browsing online shops on their seats and students did not seem to mind my presence.

After the first tutorial, all the students signed and turned the consent forms. In order to minimize the impact of my presence, in Bruce's tutorials I sat in the back row so that students could not see me, unless they turned their head back. I was aware that my presence might change the dynamics of the class; however, by positing myself in the back, I could avoid drawing more attention than necessary. In Stephanie's tutorials, because of the classroom size, I sat with the students, as a member of one of their groups. I always sat at the bottom of the U shape of the seats and usually a group of students sat beside me. Therefore, all Stephanie's and Bruce's students acknowledged my presence, but they had been minimally affected over time because I did not actively engage in classroom processes and they seemed to continue their interactions in the same way when I was not part of their particular group. While observing, I took down as detailed notes as possible, such as the distribution of students in class, who sat in which group and row, at what time, answered the tutor, in order to record particular interactional patterns and words. I felt these verbal patterns and talk were a crucial part of my ethnographic practice in order to ensure the "factual accuracy" (Erickson, 1994, p. 45) of what I described. In my classroom proforma I also left a blank page where I drew a simplified picture of the class showing the podium, the seats and groups of students (See Appendix 10)), which could help me to build a "holistic" view (Erickson, 1994, p. 45) of the classroom dynamics, when I was back home putting together my observations and notes in my classroom proforma.

I recognised repetitive teacher questions, such as, "*There's no right or wrong answers*." as important interactional patterns because they can be inseparable elements of interactional culture or cultural knowledge (Green, *et al.*, 2012). As I have mentioned in the section of *Classroom ethnography* on the impact of ethnographic researchers' participation on the nature of the event, I was aware of the influence of my role on the data collection (Hammersley, 1990; Mackey & Gass, 2005). Interviews can be a useful tool for helping to understand the dynamic of interactions and the meaning that participants subsequently ascribe to their actions (Doherty, 2015). I therefore probed the reasons behind those interactional patterns and silences in my interviews with the tutors and students, which will be presented in my analysis chapters. The accounts given by the tutors and students allowed me to come to the actual level (Bhaskar, 2002) of the interactions in class, because it is through the reasons they gave and their explanation that I could come to an understanding of why students were performing in certain ways.

Being Chinese seemed to draw student participants closer to me as we shared the same ethnical and cultural identity. I see my identity of being Chinese as the visible tool of my ethnographic toolkit (Reyes, 2020). According to Reyes (2000), ethnographic toolkit refers to researchers' backgrounds, identities and characteristics (p. 225). Race/ethnicity and nationality are the visible tools of ethnographic toolkit (Reye, 2020, p. 228). Some of the student-participants seemed surprised to find me as a Chinese PhD candidate who also did a masters' degree in the UK, which is an invisible tool of my ethnographic toolkit (Reye, 2020). Sometimes, when Stephanie's tutorials finished, some female students came to talk to me or to ask some questions, ranging from the academic talk such as curriculum knowledge to some more random chats, like, how to apply a PhD. I was very willing to tell them what I knew and to share my experience, which naturally opened up the conversation and built up the trust and rapport between me and my participants (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Reyes, 2000). For Bruce's classes, a friendly greeting or even some random chats before the class with his students would draw our relationship closer. Similarly, I sometimes chatted with Stephanie and Bruce when their classes finished. They were all very friendly and respectful tutors. Bruce wanted to know what his students were doing; I then shared with him without giving away any identifiable information. I was aware of my ethical responsibility all the time. It was through these exchange moments that I was able to build up trust and more rapport (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995) with Stephanie, Bruce and their students.

As a bilingual researcher, I had the capacity to conduct interviews in either English or Chinese, as preferred by my participants. This is a strength of this bilingual study because it allowed my participants to be heard directly, without the filter of L2 proficiency. However, it also created the additional workload of translating Chinese into English, which posed challenges around maintaining the original meaning. Nevertheless, this process proved invaluable because it allowed me to better understand what my participants wanted to express (especially those with a Chinese background), particularly when their accounts referenced specific cultural meanings behind the words used, which I will present in my following analysis Chapter Five.

Near the end of the courses, I started to invite students for interviews. All the interviews with Stephanie's students took place in a booked private study room in the library. Three of the interviews with Bruce's students were conducted after Bruce finished class and took place in the same classroom; the rest of Bruce's student interviewees were interviewed in the private study room in the library as well. The teacher interviews all took place in Stephanie's and Bruce's offices. Bruce and Stephanie were interviewed twice, once before I started to observe their course, the other, after the courses finished. Conducting these interviews was a fun and interesting experience, as it was more like having a friendly conversation with the tutors and students rather than interviewing people. The happy morning greetings before class, or random chats after class and my weekly attendance to every lecture/tutorial just like one of the group members, mutually strengthened my relationship with my participants. This also gave me a growing sense of gradually becoming an 'insider'((Malinowski, 1922; Reyes, 2020) of the classroom culture . While observing in class, I tried to understand from an insider's point of view why some students were performing in particular ways and why the tutor adopted certain strategies or emphasized key points in certain ways. My prior experience as a Chinese international Masters' student also reminded me of my own performance in various classroom contexts. Although I was officially a researcher, my internal role changed between an "insider" and an "outsider" at different points in the study, between my participants and myself, allowing me to understand from the participants' point of views but also going beyond. A longer period of time would have enabled me to develop an even stronger understanding of the classroom space, for I missed the first a few classes of the courses (a limitation which I will discuss in Chapter 8 Conclusion).

Conclusion

This methodology chapter has explained why I have taken a critical realist philosophical stance and how ethnography as a methodology is consistent with this stance. This study also draws on ethnography of communication, which has been adapted to investigate classroom communication. Classroom observation and semi-structured interviews were thus used as research methods for this study. Observations informed by ethnography and the theoretical framework allowed the researcher to observe both the students' and the

lecturer's/tutor's performance throughout the semester and notice particular interaction patterns. All the participants have been deidentified. The interview data collected was then transcribed, translated in Chinese, coded and themed.

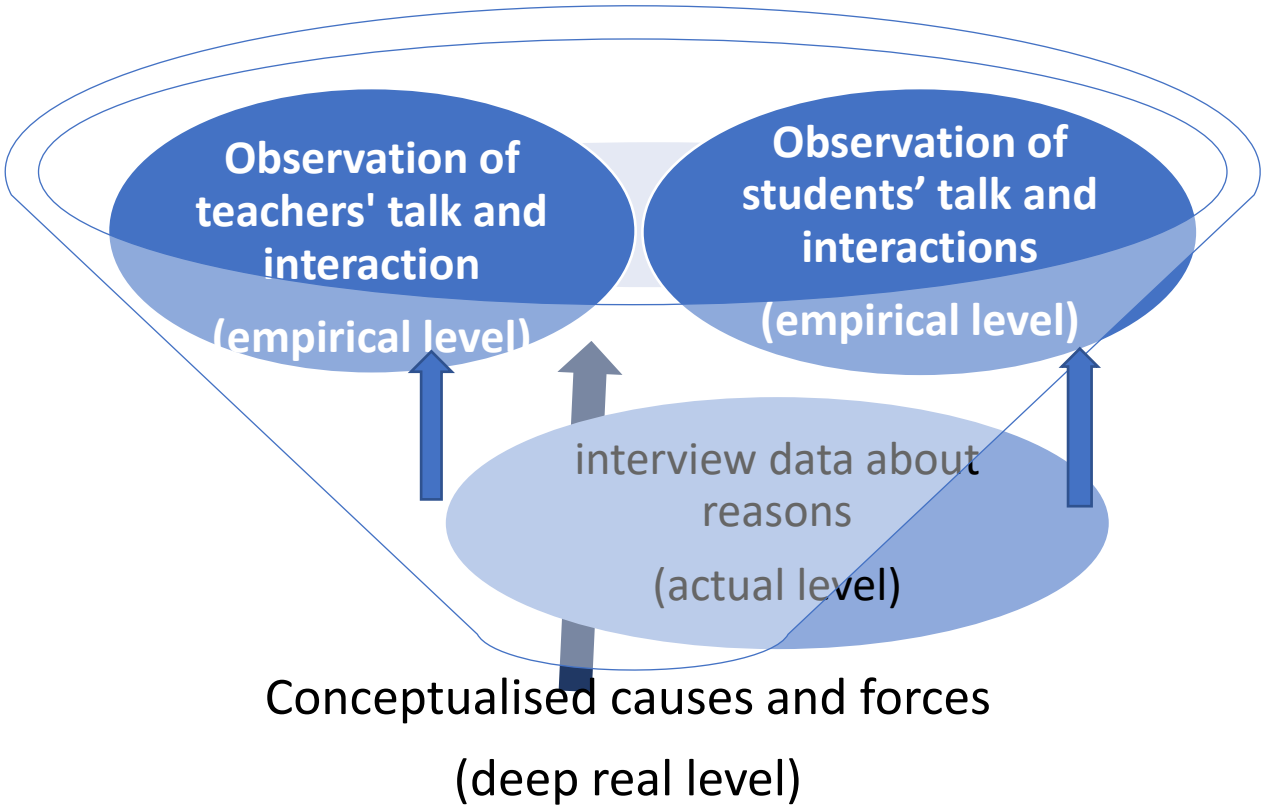

Figure 4.1: Data set mapped onto critical realist ontological levels

Figure 4.1 maps the data set to the layered ontology of critical realism. The ethnographic observations captured the "empirical" (Bhaskar, 2012) level of classroom interactions while the interviews allowed the researcher to probe the "actual" (Bhaskar, 2012) level of classroom interactions. The analysis sought to explore the potential forces shaping students' classroom performance or interaction patterns, which paved the way for understanding the "real" (Bhaskar, 2012) level of classroom interactions in theoretical terms, such as knowledge structures and the pedagogic models of teachers and learners. In light of this data, in the following three chapters I will provide a detailed analysis of the Chinese international students' performances of oracy demands in Courses A, B and C.

Chapter 5 Analysis of Course A

Course A was sampled as a social science course, the content of which is subject to discussion, debate, critique and alternatives. This is a highly theoretical course drawing on sociology to inform a number of professional practices. This course had a large enrolment of 261 students, of whom the vast majority (approximately 80%) were international students from China. This chapter will report the analysis of Course A's oracy demands and students' performance from both the teacher's and students' perspectives. Seven students (six Chinese international students – A, B, C, D, E and F – and one L1 student – G) were interviewed, and the course tutor, Stephanie, was interviewed twice. In addition, this chapter gives a detailed description of the formal design and the enacted practices in classes. Positioned on the philosophical stance of critical realism (Bhaskar, 2012), this chapter will probe beneath the empirical level of classroom interaction and look for the potential causes and roots of particular students' performance by making invisible attitudes and expectations visible. Specifically, the analysis starts with the formal design of the course in terms of its intended curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, then gives a detailed ethnographic description of the enacted classroom practices before providing analysis of the course's oracy demands and the students' performance, drawing on both the teacher's and students' interview data.

Formal design

The following is a detailed description and analysis of the formal design of Course A. I will analyse the oracy demands from the perspectives of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.

Curriculum (an overview)

Course A was a core compulsory course offered at the master's level. It drew on sociology, social theory and philosophy to inform a variety of professional practices. The content of the course was theoretical; each lecture introduced a theorist and outlined aspects of his/her theory as relevant to the professional field. The curriculum thus introduced students to a variety of theories from which the students then chose two to apply to a

professional problem for their assessment task. Course A aimed to have students explore significant concepts, contemporary debates and discourses on theoretical issues that were considered important for the study of professional practices. For this course, there was no assigned textbook. Rather, for each lecture there was a set reading, typically a selection from a primary text (a chapter or article) by the theorist(s) discussed, made available in digital format. This reading was supported by a 'preparatory task' which involved a table of questions for students to answer after reading the set articles.

Given the emphasis on social theory, the curriculum for the course was 'strongly classified' (Bernstein, 2000), offering abstract theory, specialised conceptual terms and only occasional everyday examples. Each lecture introduced the work of one or more modern sociologists' theories, such as Durkheim and Marx and their conceptual vocabulary, giving students a broad understanding of the theory, disciplinary sub-fields, as well as how different theories view certain phenomena.

The tutorials were task-based and tutors could adjust the preparatory tasks if they wanted to. For example, Stephanie simplified the previous tasks by only listing one question related to the main idea of the article and four questions to the important details of the materials. Tutors had their own agency to decide how to recontextualise the curriculum for their own tutorial.

Pedagogy

Course A was designed as a combination of weekly lectures to the whole class (261 students) and weekly tutorials in tutorial groups, each of which had around 25 students. Each lecture and tutorial lasted an hour. All students attended the weekly lecture. There were nine tutorial groups, each of which had its own tutor. Course A was taught by the coordinator, Linda, who was the main lecturer, and the nine tutors. In each lecture, different tutors were invited as guest lecturers to contribute part of the lecture, allowing students to hear about their different areas of expertise.

The lectures could be considered to have been both 'strongly classified' and 'strongly framed'. The content of the lectures all related to complex theories which had their own specialised conceptual vocabulary. Hence the language was typically academic and theoretical rather than everyday language. The curricular knowledge of the theories was strongly classified, bringing many abstract concepts together. Every lecture was video-recorded and made available to the students via the course webpage to help mitigate the high oracy demands of the lectures for L2 students, and for students who were unable to attend.

Each theorist's work constructed a vertical discourse, being abstract and decontextualised. Some of the theories shared similar ideas or compatible themes; some offered very different or perhaps even opposing approaches, such as Foucault's theory and Marxism. Therefore, since it offered a variety of alternatives, the nature of the curriculum could be considered to reflect a horizontal knowledge structure. The assessment task, asking students to consider how alternative theories apply to a professional problem, reflected and exploited this horizontal knowledge structure.

While the lectures gave students an overview of the curricular topics, the tutorials supported students to unpack and explore each theory by giving them more time to understand and critique the theories taught in the previous lecture. Each week students got the set reading to prepare for their next week's tutorial. To help them with this, a 'preparatory task' was supplied for each session's reading. Students needed to be familiar with those readings in order to engage in the participatory tasks in the tutorials. The tutorials, from the researcher's point of view, were designed to be 'weakly classified' and 'weakly framed', with the purpose of allowing students more input and control of the class discussion and helping them to apply or exemplify the theoretical knowledge so that the theoretical concepts or knowledge could be more accessible. Therefore, given the designed pedagogy, the lecture could be considered to reflect a much stronger framing than the tutorials.

The tutorials were designed loosely as a discussion working through the quotes and questions in the pre-preparatory reading tasks. At another level, each tutor could decide how to conduct their own tutorial and use the course material, setting their own readings and preparatory tasks. For example, the tutor could decide the forms of classroom interaction and the time devoted to students' discussion. This could also be considered to weaken the framing of the tutorial pedagogy.

Assessment

The summative assessment for Course A consisted of a critical essay of 4,000 to 5,000 words, excluding references. Students were asked to choose two relevant theories to apply to a professional issue that interested them. Students were expected to be able to apply these two theoretical lenses to their issue and to argue which one was better in terms of understanding the issue. Therefore, the assessment was concerned with strongly classified knowledge but the task was weakly framed, allowing students to choose their issue and which of the course theories to pursue.

Oracy demands of the formal design

The oracy demands of the lectures were designed as a high listening demand that relied heavily on teacher monologue with no student talk elicited in class. It was via this teacher monologue that lecturers were able to give a detailed exposition about each complex theory. Students were required to have good listening capacity in terms of keeping up with the pace of the teaching and understanding the disciplinary discourse. In contrast, the oracy demands of the tutorials made high demands of students' interactive talking because they aimed at helping students understand the theories better via co-construction of knowledge between teacher and student. The tutorials were based on answering the questions from the pre-preparatory reading tasks. The tutorial design required students to exchange their ideas and opinions, to listen closely to one another's contributions and discuss or even argue about points; in doing so, they would construct knowledge together and achieve a richer and deeper understanding of the theories. The tutorials were meant to rely on a weaker classification than the lectures, anticipating the assessment assignment.

The above is a description of the formal design of Course A. The curriculum was highly classified with traditional strongly framed lectures, whereas the tutorials were more weakly classified and weakly framed in the hope of helping students construct new knowledge and making complex theories more accessible.

The enacted classroom practices

The following sections will present the enacted pedagogic practices that Stephanie had adopted and the dynamics of interactions in class. The first part will provide an ethnographic description of the lectures, and Stephanie's and her students' accounts on the interactions and their performance. Second part will similarly offer an ethnographic description of the tutorials before reporting and analysing Stephanie's and her students' interviews.

Lectures

Ethnographic descriptions of the lectures

Because of the number of students, the lectures took place in a large hall that could hold hundreds of people. The hall staged the lecturer on a raised podium at one end, with a large screen behind to display PowerPoint slides. The PowerPoint slides were made available for students before the lecture. Because there were over 200 of them, the students sat in three areas, with the majority sitting in the main area and others sitting at the sides of the hall. Each side space had a TV screen that also showed PowerPoint slides, which made it convenient for the students who sat on the sides or far away to see what was on the main lecture screen. I observed that most students brought iPads showing the slides, so they could also just browse their own screen while listening. There were students who kept taking notes during the lecturing, but some chatted with each other quietly during the lectures. These chats were often about random topics, unrelated to the content of lectures. Apart from listening quietly, taking notes, or side-talking (Lemke, 1990) between students, it was observed that quite a few students played with their phones

occasionally, texting messages or browsing the internet. Interestingly, there were students who arrived late at every observed lecture.

Approaching the end of the semester, there were fewer and fewer students attending the lectures, especially for the last two lectures. After every lecture finished, it could be seen that one or more students would approach their main lecturer to ask questions. The main lecturer was very patient in answering the students' questions.

The pacing of the lecture was fast, even intense, with lots of input for each lecture. As the students reported, they had to concentrate if they wanted to keep up with the pace, as they would get lost if they were distracted in class. Therefore, the instructional discourse (Bernstein, 2000) was highly sequential, fast-paced and teacher-dominated.

The framing of the lectures was also 'strong' (Bernstein, 2000) because the lecturers held the floor all the time. Lecturers had the full control of the pace and topic of the lecture. Students were not offered any chance to talk, raise questions or discuss topics in class. There were a few times when the lecturers asked questions, but they were rhetorical, addressed rhetorically by the lecturers themselves, or they were checking questions that asked students to just raise their hands to respond. For example, the main lecturer once asked: *"How many of you are from [a certain course]?"*, or when the lecture finished, she asked: *"Everyone happy?".* Therefore, the regulative discourse constructed a strongly hierarchical teacher-students relationship and demonstrated strong framing, which is typical of conventional lecture pedagogy.

Lecturer's account of lectures

The following is an analysis of the observed lecturer's two interviews. This lecturer, Stephanie, was one of the nine tutors as well as a guest lecturer. She was an experienced teacher with over 20 years of teaching experience who especially advocated for a dialogic teaching and learning model for tutorials. I started to observe her tutorials in the middle of the course. In total, six out of the eleven-week semester tutorials were observed. There

were 21 students in her group with only five L1 students, while the other 16 students were all L2 students from China. The first interview was done after the first observed class and the second one was conducted near the end of the course.

Impersonal classroom setup

As reported by Stephanie, the lectures in Course A generally worked well and all lecturers taught clearly, with the only weakness being that lectures took place in a very "impersonal" hall which was not a normal classroom, but rather a hall that could hold hundreds of people. Lecturers were positioned on the stage, far away from their students and found it hard to move around or to see their students clearly. Because of the location and the number of students, she thought that students could be easily distracted:

> *I think the lectures on the whole work were fairly clear, but you could see the lecture hall. I think that lecture theatre affected us as well because it's very impersonal. You've got all the pillars down this side. You've got students in groups [who] are looking at the laptops; I was really getting distracted by that. It's quite impersonal, you are very far away from the students, up on this desk thing, and I found I couldn't really see when I gave the lecture. I was so far away from people. I couldn't really see them and also you're being filmed you are not able to move. You're standing.* (Tutor Stephanie, Course A)

This impersonal feeling of having classes in a hall was also mentioned by one of Stephanie's students; I will address this later in the analysis of students' interviews. Having lectures in such a big hall may not only affect the teacher's experience and feelings, but also might not support the listening demands. As Stephanie indicated, the impersonal setup might cause students to become distracted.

Interactive lectures or traditional lectures

While Stephanie tried hard to make her tutorials interactive, her beliefs on what constitutes a good lecture were different. She believed that if a lecture was designed to be quite interactive, it would not work well. For example, in her interview she said:

> *The ones where I personally struggled with are ones where all of sudden the lecturer said to us that we should talk to the person beside you. And I totally break my concentration, it just breaks my flow in listening. I'm listening more, I want to listen, I want to hear. I want to be thinking about what's been said to me, then all of sudden [I'm] being asked to talk to the person beside me and that completely breaks my concentration.*

The oracy demands were highly focused on listening. They required students to concentrate on their teacher's speech without any chance to speak. Students only needed to focus on the content of the lecture while digesting and thinking about the input. No student talk was encouraged throughout the lecture. This intense mode of listening was not compatible with interactive dialogue. From Stephanie's perspective, these listening focused lectures were not problematic, as it gave students the essential knowledge that they needed. For Stephanie, lectures are more about introducing, explaining or demonstrating. For this reason, she does not subscribe to the emphasis on interactive lectures (Sokoloff and Thornton, 1997), which in her stated view interrupts the consistency of the students' intense model of listening and thinking, as sudden demands for speaking can interrupt their concentration and break the pace they have been maintaining. In other words, for Stephanie, good lectures are strongly framed, giving the lecturer strong control of the class in terms of the sequence, the pace and the content, with little control or input offered to students.

Bi-vocal voices

As described above, each lecture would include a tutor acting as guest lecturer, which means students would hear two different voices. The main lecturer, Linda, and the guest lecturer would each give a detailed introduction to the theory that they were going to teach. From Stephanie's point of view, this bi-vocal lecture style enabled students to learn from different perspectives: *"I think it works quite well, the two different voices in there and the links Linda makes in the end to such broader theories, so that to me works quite well".* From my point of view, this may also have helped students prepare for their assessment, which required them to apply two different theories to an issue and determine which offered more insight.

The oracy demands did not change when the lectures switched to the bi-vocal setup. Although lectures were still in the form of teacher monologue rather than being interactive, according to Stephanie, it was helpful for students' thinking and would not interrupt the stream of their thoughts. The pedagogic discourse was highly classified with a horizontal discourse of theories. These bi-vocal lecturers, however, required students to have a good listening ability, because students had to quickly get used to different accents.

Students' account of lectures

This section analyses the students' interviews in order to understand the oracy demands and the nature of the teaching and learning in Course A's lectures from their perspectives. Six L2 Chinese international students and one L1 student were interviewed. Most interviewed students reported that the lectures were fast-paced and the content was quite challenging. Many of them felt that the content was philosophical and abstract. Some students said they had to be very attentive in listening so that they could understand the teaching. One student reported that in the lectures, she was easily lost if she was distracted for a few seconds.

…not participatory

Interestingly, in terms of the lecture hall setup, one student shared an attitude similar to Stephanie's: *"For lectures, I feel they weren't that engaged because of the location, which was not very suitable for having classes, I think" (Stephanie's student F).* She felt that students in the lectures did not engage much in either listening or talking during the lectures, and that this was caused by the lecture hall setup both physical and the curriculum, because students could easily get distracted. She stated that the class took place in a hall which, in her opinion, was not a proper place for teaching. Another student raised the same issue: *"For lectures, it is still quite hard to understand because the classes were taking place in a big hall and the lecturers were speaking fast, so sometimes you really didn't know what they were saying" (Stephanie's student B*).

The above quotes from students F and B align with Bernstein's (2000) pedagogic theory that regulative discourse is the dominant discourse in which instructional discourse is embedded. The place of the lectures – the hall – enabled and enforced a regulative discourse that encouraged a traditional model of lecturing. This physicality could automatically establish a strong hierarchical teacher-students relationship.

As noted above, the strongly hierarchical regulative discourse with respect to teacher-students relationships, set up by the physical conditions of the large hall, contributed to there being little interaction and high listening demands. Students had to concentrate on what the lecturers said; otherwise, they might not be able to keep up with the pace of the lecture.

Similar to student B, as noted in the above, who reported that the teacher's speech was fast and hard to keep up with and that it was easy to become lost while listening in the big hall, other interviewed students reported the same experience:

> *I think you can be easily distracted because of the size of the hall [in the lectures] and then you missed the content. (Student C)*

In lectures, we just sat there and listened. (Student D)

And also, the teacher was talking according to the PPT, with little interaction, so I feel it was a bit hard to concentrate. (Student F)

These comments highlight that the lecture made intense listening demands of students. The interviewed students' and lecturer's accounts indicated that both the strongly framed regulative discourse and strongly classified instructional discourse set up a teacher-centred model in which the lecturers provided expository talk and students had to listen attentively. This model of teaching and learning requires a good listening ability if a student is to understand the content and keep up with the pace. However, the curriculum of Course A also brought challenges to students, compounding the difficulties they were already having in meeting the intensive demands of listening and trying to understand the theories. The following section gives the interviewed students' accounts of the curriculum.

Curriculum difficulty

Most of the interviewed students reported that the curriculum was challenging. They found that the theories were new, not practice-oriented and quite abstract:

And each lecturer was talking about a different person's theory. And it was a bit abstract. (Student A)

I feel it was a bit hard. The thoughts of different theorists were difficult to understand and there were lots of readings. (Student C)

I think the content is quite new to me. (Student E)

I think it's very theoretical and I didn't know their [theorists'] thoughts. (Student F)

It hasn't been super practical. (Student G)

These reports suggest that the curriculum covered in the lectures posed additional challenges to the students with respect to understanding the theorists' ideas. The knowledge in the curriculum was unfamiliar to students and required them to invest a good

amount of effort into the reading materials. The language of the reading material was not in everyday language but rather theoretical, and the content was more complex.

To summarise the lecturer's and students' accounts of the lectures, from Stephanie's point of view, the venue for the lecture was impersonal and limiting while from the students' points of view, the curriculum added additional challenges. Stephanie believed that the bi-vocal lectures allowed students to hear different voices and engage with different areas of expertise. However, the students reported that the strongly classified curriculum was challenging. In addition, some L2 students stated that the pacing was fast and they had to concentrate hard, otherwise they might be distracted. To understand this enactment through a Bernsteinian theoretical lens, Course A was characterised by strong classification in terms of its curricular knowledge, which encouraged its lectures to be designed and practiced via a strongly framed approach. Thus, the oracy demands of the lectures were highly listening oriented. Little interaction between teachers and students occurred in class.

Although Course A's design involved strongly framed and strongly classified lectures, it also included weakly framed tutorials in which half of the tutorial time was invested in student discussion. The next section will analyse the weakly framed tutorials.

Tutorials

Ethnographic description of the classes

I was able to observe five weekly tutorials lead by the same experienced tutor — Stephanie. Each tutorial lasted 50 minutes to an hour. The tutorials were all taught in small classrooms which could accommodate a maximum of 30 students. In the observed tutorials' classroom, the desks were arranged in a rectangular U-shape, with chairs around the outside. The classroom was quite narrow and the tutor could only move inside the U area once the students were seated. There were 21 students in total. Like the attendance rate of the

lectures, there were always a few students who did not attend the tutorial each week, and in the last two tutorials there were even fewer students.

Before each tutorial, the students were expected to download and complete a set reading by a theorist presented in the previous lecture, as well as its associated 'preparatory reading task'. This was a handout with key quotes from the set reading and a table of associated questions. It was intended that the tutors would help the students discuss those questions in the next tutorial. However, after using the main lecturer's preparatory reading tasks for a few weeks, Stephanie decided to make her own. This was because she noticed that her students, including some domestic students, often found it hard and time-consuming to answer these questions: "*But it takes a lot of time to do and I had noticed that some of them, students particularly from China, were really struggling to fill that in" … "And even some of the students form the UK said, 'Yeah, it's really helpful, but it's terribly time consuming'"*. As a result, some students did not want to do these reading tasks in advance and some simply did not bring the handout to class. This reluctance to prepare meant the students often had insufficient preparation for their oral discussion in the tutorial. Considering this situation, Stephanie decided to make new, simpler questions for the reading tasks. She usually listed five broad questions in the hope of making the article easier to understand for the students and to reduce the complexity of the original handouts: *"I got sort of mid-level questions, not too much overview, but not too specific. It might help them to just read a wee bit more of the text"*. She distributed her handouts for the following week's discussion before she started each class.

In contrast to there being no student talk in the lectures, Stephanie usually allocated half of the tutorial time for group discussion. It often took a few seconds before any group discussion started, and sometimes Stephanie joked about it in class, saying, for example, *"It's always horribly quiet"*, in order to break the silence and start the conversation. The discussion typically started tentatively at a low volume before increasing. Almost every time, the first voices emerged from groups of L1 students. If there was no significant silence at the beginning, it was usually the groups of L1 students who started the discussion right away. Their voices could be heard clearly, and then the rest of the class would start to talk with each other. Most Chinese students' group discussions either ended quite soon or they

would refer back to the reading material for answers. This was also noted by Stephanie, who complained in a jocular way in class, "*You always sit looking at your computer screen!"*. Some were observed having off-topic chats about their assignments or daily life when they had nothing more to discuss in the time allocated for students' discussion.

During the group discussion time, Stephanie typically moved around the classroom within the limited central space. She visited groups, one by one, to check how they were doing, where they were up to and whether they were having any difficulties. At times, she joined their conversations. Sometimes it was observed that students did not respond to her when she asked them keenly whether they had any difficulties or questions. As a result, she moved on to check the next group. In the first few tutorials, it seemed that Chinese students were not used to this kind of approach because often, when Stephanie came to a group, the students in nearby groups automatically stopped and looked at her. In Stephanie's opinion, their reticence was caused by the crowded classroom setup, which did not allow Stephanie to physically join groups in a natural way. She had to stand or bend down awkwardly when she wanted to listen to a group's discussion, which could result in an awkward position that easily drew other groups' attention. For example, in her interview, she said: "… *because it was in a C-shape whereas I was standing behind somebody and somebody looking over… I'm sort of coming over their shoulder".* This tendency dissipated in the later tutorials, when the Chinese students would continue their discussions while Stephanie was standing beside a nearby group, listening or talking to that group of students. Through Stephanie's joining in the dialogue, students came to a better understanding of the lesson content and what was expected of them. In contrast, Stephanie had no problems in joining those L1 students' group discussions, and sometimes even sat on the table laughing during the conversation.

When discussion time finished and the class reconvened for plenary discussions, Stephanie often faced another round of silence unless the L1 students answered her immediately. I observed that most Chinese students sat still and looked stiff, even nervous, avoiding eye contact with Stephanie: *"You can see in their faces: 'Don't ask me! Don't ask me! And I'm going to look around. I'm going to look at my hands'" (Stephanie, course A)*. But, there were

three Chinese students who often gave their answers voluntarily and responded to the teacher's questions.

The moments when students failed to respond to Stephanie's questions are understood as empty turns, leaving gaps in the classroom discourse. There were 13 such empty turns observed across the five tutorials attended (three, six, three, one and zero respectively). During those moments, Stephanie used various strategies from using encouraging language, saying, for example, *"Excellent!", "What else?", "What were you saying?",* or even stronger exhortations like, *"Give me a word!", "Give me an issue!" or "Come on!"*. Sometimes, she patted somebody gently on the shoulder to get them to speak. This kind of direct nomination worked well as a pedagogic strategy because the nominated Chinese students typically did provide appropriate answers when they were called upon, although most of them were reluctant to volunteer to answer questions and chose to remain quiet during teacher-student interactions.

To summarise the tutorial observation, the typical oral patterns of Stephanie's tutorials were first that Chinese international students were quieter than the L1 students during the group discussions. Secondly, the L1 students answered Stephanie's questions promptly, with three Chinese international students often voluntarily contributing their answers, whereas the rest of the Chinese international students were a lot more reluctant to participate during the teacher question time, throughout all the five tutorials I observed in the second half of the semester. They either waited for other students to give an answer or spoke only if Stephanie patted their shoulder gently. During the group/paired discussion time, quite a lot of the groups spent a good deal of time looking at their screens rather than talking actively with the person beside them. It was observed that Stephanie, via an explicit approach, tried very hard to establish a weakly framed regulative discourse by organising and investing much time in group discussion. She constantly joined students' discussions like a group member, though physically awkwardly because of the U-shape of the seating layout. This also breaks down the hierarchical teacher-students relationship in the lectures to a more friendly and closer relationship. This group discussions in turn could also contribute to a weakly framed instructional discourse in which students construct knowledge together via daily language while sharing their own experiences to break the

theoretical language used in the reading material down to a more easily understandable, common-sense way of speaking. It was in this group/pairs discussion activity that the classification of the curriculum was intentionally weakened by applying the theoretical knowledge taught in the lectures to real-life contexts.

Tutor's account of tutorials

The following analysis is based on the two interviews with the observed teacher, Stephanie, during which I sought to gain her perspective and interpretations of the incidents, decisions and patterns of interaction observed in the tutorials.

Preparatory reading tasks

In week six, Stephanie replaced the course's reading tasks with more general questions of her own. She explains her reasons for this below:

> *And I feel in answering Linda's table, they were trying so hard to translate the questions, work out what the questions meant. I didn't think they were quite managing to fill it in particularly well. So, when someone can't see the wood for the trees, they were so busy concentrating on every little single bit, they can't see the bigger picture. Whereas with the big sheet, they weren't even bringing it. They were almost kind of trying to pretend the big sheet didn't exist. (Tutor Stephanie, Course A)*

Stephanie's account tells us the students focused too much on the reading task line by line, working hard on decoding the questions. However, by focusing excessively on the details, the students were unable to understand the article from a holistic perspective. At worst, it may even have intimidated them, putting them off doing those questions for the next tutorial. If this were the case, the pace of the class would be significantly slowed and the learning efficiency would be reduced. Stephanie did not want the students to be scared off by those detailed questions.

She wanted to help her students get access to the reading more easily and thus redesigned the preparatory task using only five main questions: "*I could see students sitting up straight going, 'Oh, there are only five questions. Oh, oh, that's good'".* This account suggests that the redesigned handout questions were more accessible. The new form of the questions was welcomed by the students, who were consequently less intimidated. This indicates that Stephanie as a tutor was given a large degree of control and flexibility to recontextualise the course curriculum as she saw fit. She was encouraged to do what she considered valuable and appropriate for her tutorials. Tutors in Course A could adjust their own classes based on what their students really needed and what they considered best for them. It also helps us to understand that adjusting the preparatory tasks is important, because if students do not have good preparation, they will not be able to construct knowledge together. They will not be able to have the oral interaction through which new knowledge is built together and the tutor's expected oracy demands around interactive talk would be dramatically declined as well. This highlights that recontextualising curriculum tasks according to students' performance is vital for an effective learning process.

To draw a conclusion, Course A's tutorials were both more weakly classified in terms of curriculum and more weakly framed in pedagogic practices. Stephanie had considerable agency to decide how to best recontextualise the curriculum to support her students' learning, and she chose to make the reading tasks more accessible in the interest of student learning and participation.

"*There's no right or wrong answer*"

It was observed that in every one of Stephanie's tutorials, she said, *"There's no right or wrong answer".* When asked why she emphasised this so much, she replied, *"It's about accuracy. So knowing whether other students mean accurately or supported by the text depends a lot on the extent you know [the] text and how familiar you are with the text".* This kind of knowledge system suggests that the nature of knowledge is problematic and

thus there is no absolute right or wrong answer, but rather alternatives that need to be weighed up and compared. This claim may eliminate Chinese international students' concern for providing "the right" answer (Ng, 2007, p. 49), which may contribute to their fear of being wrong. This process also aligns with the active role of learning in constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978), whereby new knowledge is constructed by the teacher and learner or between learners in tutorials:

> *Vygotsky didn't say we were constructing knowledge, you know, we construct knowledge together as if the knowledge doesn't exist. You have to, in order to construct knowledge, you have to have an understanding what experience is presented to you or you interact with the world of experience. Knowledge doesn't come from nowhere, and so the teacher's role is one of thinking about how the knowledge is presented, thinking about how you present the knowledge in a way to help the students to understand and help connect that knowledge to students' own experience and prior knowledge. So they are constructing. To me it is not knowledge constructing, it's forms of knowing, meaning-making. You are helping your students to make sense and understand the theory of [subject matter] and then to use that theory in different ways. (Stephanie, Course A tutor)*

The above explanation suggests that in Stephanie's view, new knowledge is built upon existing knowledge or should engage with previous experiences. Constructing knowledge is a dynamic interactive process since it requires both parties to share, exchange or construct meanings in order to acquire new knowledge. Therefore, the teacher has to think about how they can help students to construct knowledge, in what way they can present knowledge and how they can engage students' prior knowledge or experiences. Based on Stephanie's account, social constructivism is always related to moving from prior knowledge or experiences to new knowledge. From this point of view, Course A's knowledge is presented in a horizontal knowledge structure (Bernstein, 2000) because knowledge opens to answers, experiences, opinions and interpretations. The system of knowledge is not systematically built up, but rather needs students to understand or generate new knowledge through discussions in which ideas and opinions are shared and

arguments are made progressively through exposure to new experiences with that growing knowledge.

As a result, Stephanie emphasised that unlike the lectures, a good tutorial should be interactive in order to construct knowledge: "*I think a good seminar develops its own rhythm. Everybody comfortable talking to one another. Everybody is involved".* The interactive pattern that enables the process of knowledge construction has its own rhythm: *"So everybody [is] either talking or if they are quiet, they are looking, they are nodding and writing things down*". Also, she added, "*I think they need to feel that it's alright to ask for help*". But how can a teacher cultivate this kind of pedagogic discourse in which students feel safe asking questions and are willing to interact? Stephanie says:

> *Anyway, it was social constructivism not in action because we trying to really follow principles of social constructivism learning and if you don't have students in groups, you are not going to get it. You are not going to get the social dynamics. It's going to enable the social constructivist learning and knowledge to come together, so the group setup is vital.*
>
> *R: It's the principle?*
>
> *S: It's absolutely the bedrock. It's the foundation of it, of the constructing the knowledge and learning and everything is all based on the social groups and social bonding that goes on and the ideas that people [are] bouncing off one another (Stephanie, Course A tutor)*.

From this exchange, constructivism is portrayed as a two-way communication rather than one-way lecturing, Stephanie believed that having student groups is the key to an interactive tutorial because it is a crucial approach to managing knowledge construction between students. This also aligns with Alexander's (2008) emphasis that students' discussion or dialogic dialogue can happen within student groups. From the theoretical perspective, a student group establishes a regulative discourse (Bernstein, 2000) in which interactive discussions at the instructional discourse (Bernstein, 2000) level can be

generated. Otherwise, according to Stephanie, the tutorial may instantly turn into a lecture form of teaching:

> *The only way you shift the dynamic from the teachers [being] at the centre to a [non] teacher-led, teacher-centred lesson is to have students set up in groups. Any other way, automatically, students are tending to think, it'll be teacher led (Stephanie, Course A tutor)*.

In the above extract, Stephanie suggested that the classroom setup can have a powerful impact on the model of teaching and learning. She believed that dividing students into groups is vital for successful constructivism-oriented tutorial teaching and learning. This indicates that the group setup allows students to have more control of the class so that dialogue between students may take place spontaneously, allowing the students to build knowledge together. This also resonates with the Bernstein's (2000) pedagogic discourse theory that the instructional discourse is embedded within regulative discourse and the regulative discourse is the dominant discourse (p. 32). It tells us that if a class is expected to be highly demanding in terms of oracy, the teacher needs to make sure the classroom set-up of the regulative discourse fits in. Specifically, it highlights that the regulative discourse which establishes the forms of oral interaction should be consistent with the nature of acquiring, understanding and building the curricular knowledge that is presented in the instructional discourse. A regulative discourse that is weakly framed by having students in groups can allow students contribute to the constructive process by exchanging their opinions, personal experiences, understanding of the articles or theories and their views of certain issues. This instructional discourse can be recontextualised through students' talk and discussions. Therefore, a class with high oracy demands weakens framing by reducing the teacher's overt control of the class and may weaken classification by giving students more chances to make meaning of the topic and class content.

Unfortunately, the observed classroom layout did not allow Stephanie to have the expected classroom interaction; the tables were fixed in the U-shape, meaning students were unable to sit in real groups and the discussion was limited to pairs or three people at

most. She repeatedly mentioned this in her interviews: *"it's not set up for dialogic teaching and discussion at all"; "there is no dialogic element to it [students' conversation]".* It was a difficult situation as Stephanie tried hard to find ways to encourage her students to talk within their pairs.

In the first a few tutorials that I observed, when she tried to listen to what a pair of students were talking about, other pairs nearby would simply stop talking and just look at her since there was no space for her to sit beside students and join in a pair because of the classroom setup*: "…because what tends to happen is groups to begin with go up and stand up and I don't sit down, they all stop and look at me".* Stephanie expected and aimed to cultivate a weakly framed class in which she hoped students would participate orally. She intended to give students more control of the class by devoting half of the tutorial time to discission and by encouraging them to speak in all kinds of ways. Although the discussion was not as interactive as she had hoped, Stephanie was quite skilful in scaffolding her students to think and to understand the theories. The following is an analysis of how she scaffolded her students to think critically and how she prompted student answers.

Scaffolding questions

As I observed when Stephanie asked questions in class, she purposefully broke them down to make it easier for the students to start thinking about an issue step by step. For example, when the questions required students to be critical, like when it called for them to apply a complex theory to practice, it was usually quite hard for students to start:

> *It's very much not about me saying you must be critical about your [key words removed because of ethics] system. It's about what do think about the strength of your [key words] system? How does this theory help you to look at the strength of your own [key words] system? What are some of the things that your system could maybe improve and how could this theory look and how it might improve? And that can help students pass the sense of 'am I just expected to kind of tear my home systems to shreds?' (Stephanie, Course A tutor)*.

The above reveals the way of knowledge construction between the tutor and her students through interaction, which started from the threshold before going deeper beneath the surface of a problem. Instead of asking students to be critical initially, Stephanie led students from a starting point and then had them probe underneath by asking questions bit by bit, so that students were enabled to critique or even to understand from a theoretical perspective through this scaffolding process. This example aligns with the findings of the study done by Van de Pol, Volman and Beishuizen (2012) who find that scaffolding should contingently support students' understanding. It gives students an appropriate amount of help by starting from a simple point before exploring a complex issue in the hope of understand it. In the end, students would be able to manage the task on their own, which is exactly the process of construction by mapping the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978). Stephanie's account implies that breaking a complex topic into a series of easier, simpler questions can enable students to think thoroughly and thus be able to share their opinions and construct understanding. It is by asking these issue-related questions that interaction between teacher and students might be generated, thus contributing to knowledge construction.

Also, when students did not understand the article accurately, Stephanie would not just say, *"That's wrong*", but she would instead ask them to go back to the article instead. For example, she said: *"Did [xxx] really say that?"* or *"Is that really what [xxx] said? … Ok, go back and look at it"*. This gives students gentle feedback and guidance without overwhelming them. This finding resonates with the study conducted by Heron and Webster (2018), who suggest that scaffolding talk, like one-word feedback and encouraging adjectives, can control frustration and remove students' anxiety. Here, though, Stephanie's scaffolding questions were more than simple one-word responses or positive adjectives. They were more skilful because they inspired students to think without intimidating them and thereby putting them off responding her questions. Another common strategy Stephanie tried in order to scaffold students to be as accurate as possible in terms of their understanding of the article or theory was to probe students by continually asking them, *"What else?".* Although this may sound like an easy, simple question, the power of this phrase aims at stimulating all students to give their ideas and share their opinions or understanding so that the whole class can reach a more accurate, thorough understanding. In terms of having students think critically or understand the theories/articles more

accurately, scaffolding questions have the pedagogic implication that lecturers/tutors might try to ask questions skilfully without having students feel overwhelmed even if they do not give accurate answers or arrive at a critical stage of thinking.

In order to overcome the embarrassment of silences, Stephanie often tried to diffuse the tension through humour. To some extent, this strategy relieved the nervousness of students and may have encouraged them to be less worried and more willing to step forward to give their answers or ask questions. We can see how Stephanie used humour to warm up the atmosphere when the tutorial was silent.

Humour

In the second last tutorial, I observed that Stephanie drew three stick figures of herself, aged seven, 17, and 27. The stick figures looked funny and she started to talk about herself and what she was thinking at those ages, which gave her students a good laugh. As she told her story, one home student even raised a question directly, although not one related to the course content. This suggests that her autobiographical story was inviting students to talk. As she said in her interview, it eased the awkward silence and students even asked questions spontaneously:

> *So that was the point at which I had to start bringing other things in with humour, maybe stick figures and things, trying to make up a bit more fun then, you know.*
>
> *It just seems good and what was nice is that the students were beginning to smile and then they were beginning to laugh and then, you know, they were beginning to feel more relaxed, which was nice to see. … I would maybe tell them little funny characteristic stories about myself when I was learning, when I was finding something difficult.*

It can be seen from this extract that Stephanie was skilful in using humorous stories to open up the topic and the conversation between she and her students. Students were more

willing to start to get relaxed and pay more attention while listening to her talk, especially when the talk was interesting. Students were thus more likely to engage in the class and in groups. For example, an L1 student asked Stephanie a question spontaneously after she talked about herself: *"Was your mum a feminist?"*. There were also other times when Stephanie made jokes when she had not received any response to her question: "*Three, three, three. You've got a one in three chances*". As soon as she made this joke, everybody laughed and as a result the silence was broken again. Sometimes, when nobody answered Stephanie, she would simply wait for a few seconds, or even over 20 seconds. In her words, this gave students space and time to think and prepare. This account aligns with Heron and Webster's (2018) understanding that creating a positive environment for students' learning is important. This observation also resonates with what the literature (Alexander, 2013; Engin, 2017) suggests in that it is the teacher's responsibility to create a positive atmosphere with respect to enhancing students' oral participation. It is understandable that an encouraging regulative discourse is crucial to classroom interaction and that establishing a supportive regulative discourse means the strong hierarchical teacher-students relationship needs to be weakened.

Wait time

Four out of the five observed tutorials had empty turns (no immediate responses after Stephanie posed questions), especially the first three observed tutorials, during which Stephanie either pushed students to say something by gently patting someone to ask them to speak, or simply shouted, for example, *"Give me a word!" or "Come on!"*, or sometimes she waited silently to see if anyone was brave enough to talk. The strategy of wait time did not work all the time, or she had to wait for a very long time sometimes before a student would respond and, in most cases, they were L1 students. To explain this situation, she said:

> *But the waiting time doesn't link to anything. [Laughing]. That's the issue with waiting time, if your class don't want to tell you or they are not confident to tell you, then… Whereas normally, I don't use wait time at all. I've got people lined up to answer the questions. You know: "That's a good point, I'll come to you, alright?",*

"Yeah." And sometimes they'll...some students will look a bit frightened and shake their head (Stephanie, Course A tutor).

It can be inferred that, although teachers can use wait time to allow students more time to think and thus they may become more confident to respond, it is not a guarantee that any students will answer in the end. Teachers may even have to prepare for the worst situation that of waiting for a long, long time, but get no answer. Waiting time may ease students' anxiety and give them more time to prepare an answer, but on the other hand it may not work at all. From the perspective of Bernstein's (2000) regulative discourse, we may have a better understanding of why waiting time may not work. According to his concept of regulative discourse, the class is a carrier in which recontextualisation happens as a result of the forces of both the teacher and students' expectations on the models of the teacher and the learners (p. 34-35). Both teacher's and students' expectations of the model of learner and teacher interact and contribute to this recontextualising process. Stephanie directed and selected the content of the class while offering lots of control to her students by spending half of the tutorial time on discussion and encouraging them to talk, share, exchange and argue. Therefore, this instructional discourse was expected to be weakly framed with a high demand of oracy from Stephanie's point of view. However, how most Chinese students reacted was almost the exact opposite of her expectations. This suggests that Chinese students have a very different model of learning and teaching in their minds and what they expected and were used to a strongly framed class where student speaking demands would be fairly low. I will return to this point in the section "Students' account of tutorials" where I explore students' perceptions of oracy demands.

Based on the observations and Stephanie's interviews, it can be concluded that Stephanie tried very hard to stimulate her students to think and speak. She scaffolded her students while constructing knowledge together with them. She also scaffolded to break big questions into clearer and layered sub-questions in an effort to have her students engage in critical thinking. She also paid attention to her students socially, culturally and emotionally by making efforts to make her class humorous, alive and less intense. She tried to build up a friendly and close teacher-students relationship and thought of ways to have students work in groups, but the result was not very satisfactory. This might have been

largely caused by the fixed classroom layout, which meant she was unable to divide students into groups and hence unable to have students enter into the kind of dialogic conversation as she wanted. The regulative discourse was, to a large extent, limited by the classroom setup and Stephanie found it hard to bring her student pairs physically, as she could not take a seat and thus had to bend down quite low to listen to her students.

Students' account of tutorials

In order to have a better understanding of students' quiet engagement in class, student interviews were conducted. Seven students participated in the interviews (one L1 student and six Chinese students) to talk about their attitudes towards their performance and expectations. Below is an analysis of those students' accounts of their performance and oracy demands. This process of analysis is the same as before, using coding of the transcripts to identify themes.

According to the students' interview statements, the three main causes for their reluctance to speak could be identified: oracy preparation, linguistic challenges and the Chinese cultural and educational influence. The following sections suggest how these three main themes affected the students.

Oracy preparation

In the first three observed tutorials, it was particularly obvious that most students spent a lot more time looking at their laptop screens rather than talking with their partners. It was observed that they were looking for answers from the reading materials during the time allotted for discussing the pre-reading task questions made by Stephanie. In my eyes, this observation suggested that those students were unfamiliar with their articles and the preparatory tasks. This preparation of reading materials could result in students' poor oracy preparation and hence they found it hard to talk during the pair conversations. Below are students' accounts that align with my interpretation of this particular phenomenon:

R: Sometimes I saw students finish the discussion very fast or spend most of the time looking at their laptop screen. Can you tell me why that happened?

A: Because they hadn't read it carefully. Many people, and sometimes me as well, didn't read it well at home. So during the discussion time in tutorial, we had to browse it quickly in class in order to find the answers. (Student A)

R: So is it helpful to discuss with your partner?

A: It is helpful if you had done the reading at home and thought about the answer. Then you would be able to exchange your ideas in tutorials …But if we hadn't prepared it well, then we could only chat randomly. Then it wouldn't be helpful. So the point is whether you have read the article carefully. (Student A)

It is clear that Student A's comments resonate with the observations of her fellow students. She made it clear that some peers did not prepare the reading materials well before class, thus they had to quickly get familiar with the article during the discussion, which immediately curtailed their talking time and made it hard for her to exchange ideas with other students. Therefore, this lack of familiarity with the reading materials resulted in poor oracy preparation, as the students had little input of knowledge and related personal experience to share, which naturally jeopardised the quality of their discussion.

R: So is the content too hard?

B: It's not really that the content is too hard. It could be I didn't prepare well. But for me, the articles were still a bit hard for me. (Student B)

Once again, student B also raised the same issue, which was that she did not complete her at-home task well. Even though the curriculum was not too hard in her view, insufficient preparation when it came to reading articles prevented her from being able to discuss the content with her partners. For student B, those articles were a bit hard to understand and

therefore, from this point of view, good preparation of the reading was crucial for her to be able to join in the discussion so as to have a productive talk.

R: The discussion may end fast and some students spent a lot of time looking at their computer screens. Can you talk about that?

D: … Because the literature usually had many pages and most of us hadn't finished reading all of it, there were only a few students who could discuss the article. Then the topic would be shifted very easily. And also, we may not talk in English, but if there were foreign students in the group, the topic wouldn't shift. (Student D)

Student D also gave the same account as students A and B, stating that the reason that most Chinese students did not talk actively during the discussion time was because they had not finished reading the article. Thus, the topic would be more easily shifted to random chat if there were no non-Chinese students in the group/pair.

R: Was it helpful that she came down to join your discussion?

D: It was, but according to my experience, she could have just forced every group to speak (laughing) and in that case maybe we would talk more.

R: You mean after the discussion finished?

D: Yes, force some group to speak. I think this can push students, especially L2 students so that they must read the article and must talk productively.

R: So why is it so hard for Chinese students to talk if the teacher doesn't force them to speak?

D: I don't know about others, but for myself, if I hadn't read or understood the article for that week's tutorial, then I would remain silent. (Student D)

This account of performance of silence reinforces the reason that without good preparation of the article before class, it would be very unlikely that students would be willing to answer the teacher's questions.

> *R: But for the first a few tutorials I attended with you, I remember you were quiet.*
>
> *D: I hadn't finished reading the article. (Student D)*
>
> *[One issue is] that your English is not so good, so you can't talk with others fluently, and the other is the reading preparation. I think these are the main issues. (Student D)*
>
> *Sometimes I had done good preparation. But if I was busy doing other things, then I wouldn't. (Student D)*

Student D gave a reason why she did not prepare well sometimes. If she had a lot of studying to do, she might sacrifice the reading tasks that were meant to be done at home. According to her, apart from her lack of fluency in English, her lack of preparation with respect to reading materials was the main problem.

> *R: But I noticed sometimes the discussion ended quite fast. So why did that happen?*
>
> *F: It was because we all hadn't finished reading the articles beforehand.*
>
> *… because they couldn't understand what the teacher said and couldn't understand the reading, so they just sat there waiting for other students to answer. (Student F)*

Similarly, student F also emphasised that they might not finish reading the preparatory readings at home. They might find these readings hard to understand and, as a result, they would rather wait for other students to speak. This finding suggests that it is important that students get their preparatory work done and at least be familiar with the reading material before entering the tutorial. It also indicates that students need to organise their time well so that they can spare a sufficient amount of time for their preparatory tasks.

These students' accounts are consistent with the observation and helped me identify reasons that they did not prepare well. It could either be that they prioritised other things or they did not fully understand the articles. Based on the pedagogical design of Course A, in order to have a good tutorial, the prerequisite was that students should have their reading tasks done before class. Otherwise, they would lack the content knowledge to build on, which would prevent them from discussing within group or pairs. To have preparation work done before class is a condition of learning; otherwise, students do not have the knowledge foundation for interaction. This reminds us that the oracy demands in class can be affected by the conditions of learning. Having an interactive talk or dialogic conversation between students is based on the condition that students have met the necessary requirements before entering the tutorial. Additionally, it implies that students need to be aware that it is their responsibility to organise their time outside class time and to manage their preparatory work well so they can join in the discussions in tutorials and therefore benefit from the oracy interactions.

Linguistic challenges and peer pressure

Apart from the lack of preparation before class, another factor that may have hindered students from speaking in class was the linguistic issue, according to the students' interviews. Although all the Chinese students had met the language requirements before the formal courses started, some of them still stated that they felt their English ability might limit them from expressing what they wanted to say. As a result, they either ended up not saying anything or simply hesitating long enough that they would miss their chance:

> *R: So if you had had read the article and thought about the answer, why didn't you answer Stephanie when she asked the same questions on the handout?*
>
> *A: I wasn't able to answer the question even if I knew the answer because my vocabulary is not big. So I knew what to say but I didn't know how to say it. So for example, if I wanted to answer a question in class, I need some time to prepare the answer, like checking the dictionary so that I could speak up, otherwise I would only imagine.*

This account suggests that some L2 students need time to organise their words to give an answer in English. This corresponds with Heng's (2018) finding that, as second language learners, it can take Chinese international students time to think and answer in English.

> *R: Stephanie had many questions in class, but quite a lot of the time, there were no students answering her, especially us Chinese students. How do you see this?*
>
> *B: It's probably because the content is hard to understand and even if you understand, how to express it in English is a bit difficult sometimes, for some questions. And because English is not your mother tongue, it is hard to express your exact meaning.*

What student B reported above indicates that Chinese international students may find it hard to express exactly what they mean when they use a second language. For this reason, students might choose not to speak in class. This also corresponds with the finding that chances to answer might slip away while students are organising their words in their minds (Andrade, 2010):

> *R: So other than not finishing your reading ahead of time, were there any other factors that hindered you from interacting with your teacher, that stopped you from responding immediately?*
>
> *D: Organising my language. It's mainly the organisation of language and reading preparation. In terms of organising your language, for some simple expressions, you don't need to think much and you can just give an answer, but for complicated ideas you have to think a lot in your mind about how to say this sentence, and when you are almost finished thinking, the chance is gone.*

Student D's comment resonates with the above students' accounts that it took Chinese international students more time than L1 students to formulate their thoughts into sensible sentences while retaining their exact meaning, especially for complex ideas. Unfortunately, the chance to answer might not last in a few seconds, ending when L1 students share their

ideas. However, it struck me that Chinese international students could still give their answers when they feel ready, as long as class time permits. For example, they could still give their answers when other students, regardless of whether they are L1 or L2 speakers, finished speaking, because while other students take an answering turn, the Chinese international students may be given sufficient time to organise their answers.

> *So your English ability is not at the level of these kinds of articles and not good enough to join in the classroom discussion. … But afterwards, during the question-answering time, they couldn't understand what the teachers' questions meant. And this is not an uncommon phenomenon, there are many students who were like that. (Student F)*

What student F said here indicates that it is not negligible that linguistic confidence may play a role in affecting Chinese students' classroom interaction, which resonates with Heron's (2019) finding that linguistic challenges exist among L2 students and impact their participation in class. This may also explain why Stephanie allowed students to use their mother tongue during the discussion time and encouraged them to take notes in English. This would give them some hints when of any of them spoke in front of the class and thus would also make them more confident to answer questions.

However, linguistic challenges were not the sole factor giving rise to silence. Through the semi-structured interviewing, causes that could give rise to the silence emerged. One student, who at first kept emphasising that she did not like to answer the teacher's questions because of her English, finally pointed to a deeper cause via interview questions—a sense of peer pressure. Aside from the factors of insufficient preparatory work and linguistic issues, this student said she was aware that even though she may not have the vocabulary to express her ideas or her answer may not be right, she knew her teacher would be fine with what she said. Consequently, the reason that intimidated her from speaking out in class was because of constant worries that her peers would negatively judge her "poor" English:

A: …then I was afraid of interacting with the teacher.

…

R: But is it necessary to give a right answer?

A: It seems not too important. Actually, now I think it was actually no big issue, that even if I said it wrongly or even didn't know what word to use, it would be okay for the teacher. I don't know why I was very nervous. [laughing]

R: A bit nervous.

A: Maybe because there were many Chinese students. Sometimes I feel, if there are more foreign [i.e., non-Chinese] students, I wouldn't be this scared of speaking in English. But if there were many Chinese students, I would be worried. I was worried my English would sound poor in front of other Chinese students.

R: Okay. So in this case, what else may concern you?

A: Mostly I worry my pronunciation not good. But I'm not as worried as I was last year. When I first came last year, I was very worried.

R: So you were very worried your Chinese peers would think your English was bad. Can you talk a bit more?

A: I would still worry about the content of my speech. But the first thing I worried about was not speaking well in English. The second thing I worried about was my speech content being wrong. It's probably like this.

R: So ultimately you were scared that other students would have a negative impression of you?

A: Yes! [laughing]

R: So why is that that if there were more foreign students, you would feel less worried?

A: Maybe it's because we don't know each other and even if I spoke in a strange way, they wouldn't remember who I was. So I'd have a sense of security. And in daily life, when I'm talking with foreigners, I wouldn't worry either, because even if I said it wrongly, they would try hard to understand what I really wanted to express. So in class, when there are many Chinese students, I would be really nervous, and for this

major, there are many, many, many Chinese students. And I think it's a common situation that everyone is kind of worrying about it to some extent.

The above excerpt raises and demonstrates the different interweaving factors that lead to students' worries of all sorts. The student's anxiety about her English added another layer of negative feelings – fear that she would be judged by her Chinese peers – and when all her concerns interacted, her response was to remain quiet and to wait for other students to answer than to say anything to her tutor. This feeling of anxiety resonates with Horwitz's (2001) second language anxiety that students can feel nervous or anxious to speak in a second language speaking class. From her statement, we can also see that the student knew her teacher's expectations of oracy demands: "*even if I said it wrongly or even didn't know what word to use, it would be okay for the teacher",* but she still chose not to speak. Based on the interviews with Stephanie, Stephanie had her own model of teaching and learning (Bernstein, 2000). With her model, she expected her students to actively engage and actively respond to teacher questions. However, her students may not perform the intended role within that model. So too, this student had her own model of teaching and learning.

Worrying about negative peer evaluation may also have its roots in the Chinese culture and education background. Just as Stephanie mentioned the "losing *face"* issue, some Chinese student interviewees also mentioned the impact of invisible cultural and home education influences. In the following section, I discuss Chinese students' performance beyond linguistic and peer pressure issues.

The impact of Chinese culture and education

R: But you know Stephanie often said there are no right or no answers, so why were you still worried about it?

D: This is a habit. Because in our country we are like this: we worry whether what we've said was wrong. But if you force people to talk, we all could produce

something during the discussion, not all right, but we all could voice some of our views.

It is interesting to see that even though students were told explicitly that there was no one answer or right answer, they might still choose to remain silent. Student D attributed this quiet performance to habit, which indicates, from my point of view, that this habit had been developed into the model of teaching and learning she was used to. A conflict between the teacher's and students' model (Bernstein, 2000) of teaching and learning can be seen in this extract. The tutor, Stephanie, had made it clear that there could be multiple opinions in the hope of encouraging students to bravely voice what was in their minds. However, according to student D, her Chinese classmates might still wait to be called on rather than do what Stephanie expected.

Additionally, student D commented that Chinese students were not used to speaking their thoughts and this approach fits their quiet model of learning:

R: But I noticed sometimes the discussion ended quite fast.

D: … and also I feel Chinese people are not used to speaking their thoughts. We like to keep them in our minds. For example, when we think of something that's not sensible, we don't say it. This kind of situation is common.

According to student D, her Chinese peers were more used to hiding rather than exchanging the ideas they had in mind. In order to explore the reasons behind this phenomenon, I asked student D why she thought Chinese international students seem to be reluctant to speak in class:

R: So why don't people speak?

D: I think one of the reasons is the education we've had since our childhood. It results in this way of thinking. Anyway, when I was a kid, maybe not so much the same as

you guys, since I'm a bit older [laughing], when I was a kid, in the class, we just listened to the teacher teaching and you mustn't have your own ideas. What you thought was wrong and the teacher's ideas were right. And the teacher was the absolute authority, so as time passed, we became used to keeping our own thoughts in our minds. And another reason is the difference between Chinese and English. My personal feeling is that English is a very detailed language. So according to my experience of reading literature or writing, we must talk about something in detail, the more detailed the better. You have to describe something as specifically as possible. But Chinese people rely on "wu". Chinese people, from the ancient literature up to now, [understand the idiom]: "knowing is knowing, not knowing is not knowing (知之为知之，不知为不知)". If you can "wu(悟)" the point, then you know. If you can't "wu" it, you don't know and don't ask [laughing]. I think it could be the culture and habits that affect how Chinese students perform today in the UK higher educational classes.

According to student D's explanation, Chinese cultural and educational scripts can have a profound influence on students' classroom performance. The hierarchical relationship between the teacher and students gives the teacher strong authority to transmit knowledge without giving students the chance to doubt or question. D's account of students not being allowed have their own opinions, "…*you mustn't have your own ideas",* resonates with Ng's (2007) finding that Chinese international students may tend to take their teacher's explanations and answers as "gospel truth" (p. 50). Students then may grow into a habit of thinking and keeping questions in their mind rather than vocally interacting with their teachers. Also, student D seemed to believe that English as a language might affect L1 speakers' thinking because English is a language of details. By contrast, in Chinese culture, the ancient philosophy on learning emphasises students to "wu": to understand/investigate their own knowledge rather than asking or questioning their mentor. The mentor might give some guidance during students' learning, but the rest would rely on the students themselves. The powerful cultural educational value that students need to "wu" initially originated from Buddhism (Ma and Shang, 2007). When it comes to understanding something abstract or obscure, the mentor or teacher does not teach explicitly but rather requires students to "wu" why certain phenomena happen or

what a concept means. Leaners have to understand by themselves, spending time to “wu” rather than continually asking the mentor or the teacher for answers. Over the time, after thinking and exploration of the ideas or the concept, a learner may come to a sudden enlightenment (Mo, 2020). It is a matter of grasping by dwelling on the idea rather than unpacking the idea and analysing it analytically. In other words, contrary to Vygotsky’s social constructivism, which emphasises that learning is an interactive process between a leaner and a more knowledgeable person, “wu” provides a learning theory that learning is a process by which a learner finds out the truth individually without much explicit explanation from his/her teacher.

For the purpose of this study, the above comments highlight the invisible influential impact that Chinese cultural and educational values have on Chinese students’ performance in class. It suggests that the reason that students often remain quiet cannot be simply understood from the linguistic competence perspective. It cannot be concluded that Chinese students do not respond merely because they are anxious or lacking in confidence about their language, and thus the conclusion that confidence in linguistic ability is vital to students’ willingness to participate might not be justifiable. In other words, the above statements suggest that Engin's (2017) argument that students’ confidence in their English ability is fundamental to their willingness to participate has its weakness as it fails to acknowledge the deeper influence of one’s home culture and education, which may also have a significant impact in how knowledge is experienced and built.

Based on their own models of teaching and learning, some students had strong opinions on what Stephanie should have done to have her expectations fulfilled. More than one student said that the tutor should have just “forced” them to speak, similar to what they had experienced at home:

> *R: So you had the awareness that you should speak, but many worries stopped you from speaking up.*
>
> *A: Yes, but there were a couple of times when she asked me directly and I spoke. We all seem to wait the tutor to force us to talk.*

…But if you force people to talk, we all could produce something during the discussion, not all right, but we all could voice some of our views. (Student D)

E: I think she listened to each of us when we were discussing. And in her mind, she knew whose ideas were good. And she would call on that person.

R: So you would think?

E: I thought that if she thought mine were good, then she would call me.

R: And if she didn't call you?

E: I wouldn't speak.

From this exchange, we can see that although many students generally did not want to talk in front of the whole class when it was the teacher question time, they still gave their answers when they were told their answers were good during the group discussion and were subsequently called upon by the teacher to share their ideas with the class. It can be seen that Stephanie tried very hard to get students to speak in front of the class. She took the opportunities of the students' discussions to listen carefully to what they were saying so that she could pick somebody to give their ideas in front of the class after the discussion had finished. She positively recognised students' talk when she heard them say something productive. Such skilful pedagogic assistance helped to push Chinese international students gently towards getting used to talking in front of the whole class during the teacher question time. It was through this method that she could make students feel prepared and not too nervous to give their answers during the teacher question time.

R: So can you talk about what were the classes were like in China when you did your bachelor's degree? You said you were an English major, as was I. So I guess you were taught in small groups and had classroom discussions and group discussions?

E: Yes, we had. But the teacher rarely gave us opportunities to voluntarily and actively respond when she didn't call one of us. In most cases, the group had to

decide who was going to talk [to present for the group]. Or most of the time, he or she would call on someone.

From the exchange above, we can understand that in China, the tutor/lecturer took quite a different pedagogical approach to Stephanie's. The Chinese tutor mentioned in the exchange did not expect any voluntary interaction between students and herself. This indicates that the home educational model experienced by this student would not only affect her performance in responding to teachers in the UK, but also help to form opinions on what teachers in the UK could do. Instead of doing what their British teachers expected, they were influenced by their home values regarding teaching and learning, which would put Stephanie in a hard situation and make it even harder for her to manage her class interactivity. Sometimes, instead of waiting for a voluntary answer to emerge, Stephanie simply directly asked a Chinese student to answer by gently patting them on the shoulder. As an observer, it was interesting to see the wrestling influences between the Chinese students' home educational model and Stephanie's own. To some extent, the student's model may have successfully reversed the tutor's expectation of voluntary answers, causing her to ask for answers directly. It highlights that skilful pedagogic assistance – for example, letting students know in advance that their opinions were good and that they would be called upon when the discussion finished – could increase students' confidence and ease their anxiety about giving answers so as to be ready for teacher-students interaction and to speak in front of the class.

However, there were still three Chinese students who were generally a lot more active in teacher-students interaction. They were often seen to answer Stephanie voluntarily. One of them was interviewed and gave her account as to why she was happy to answer compared with her quieter peers. She stated that she was a teacher before she started this Master's, and it was her teaching experience that enabled her to know what the teacher's expectations were; she could understand why Stephanie tried so hard to have them talk. The following section will analyse the interviewed students who were active speakers in tutorials (one was a Chinese international student and the other is an L1 student), both of whom had been teachers themselves in their home countries.

Students who were teachers…

> *R: Also, I noticed that you are one of the most active Chinese students in terms of teacher students interaction, so can I say you are confident with yourself?*
> *F: It may not be because I was confident. I was a teacher before, so maybe I knew the attitude of teachers. I knew what kind of teacher-students relationship can make both parties win. It can be said that I knew as a teacher, standing in front of the class, what kind of result he or she is expecting. And interaction is good for both teaching and learning, but most Chinese students, coming here right after their undergraduate studies in China, haven't managed this change of models, because the educational models are very different in China and the UK.*

> *G: … Sometimes, when I wanted to start the conversation, just because we only had an hour, Stephanie was kind of waiting for an answer and also if I said something, that might spark thoughts for other people and also give people time to say their own thing. But also at times, like after I'd spoken a few times in class, I would try to really dial it back, because I want to give other people a chance to share and also I was passionate about something in particular and I thought, like, I had to say something. (an L1 student who had been a teacher)*

From this exchange, it is quite clear that students F and G, who had prior teaching experience could easily understand their teacher's expectations and were more likely to participate in classroom discussions. They understood what kind of oracy demands their tutor had at that moment and they also knew that they should say something when nobody was responding. They understood that interaction was important for their learning. Their previous teaching experience enabled them to have a good understanding of the teacher-students relationship and the contingently appropriate model of teaching and learning. This finding are in line with the studies of Doherty and Singh (2007) and Heng (2018), both of whom strongly advocate that Chinese international students are mobile and adaptable. They are not deficient, but they are subjective to change and adaptable to new pedagogic cultures. More importantly, the contrasting performances of Chinese international

students being quiet or interactive suggest me that the adaptability may be hindered by many factors, such as “wu”.

Conclusion

This chapter has offered a thorough analysis of the Chinese students’ oral performance in Course A’s classes, with the course design, the lecturer’s and tutor’s attitudes and the enacted pedagogic practices and assistances investigated. Course A’s curriculum was strongly classified with respect to a spread of social theories and philosophy. It offered abstract theory, specialised conceptual terms and only the occasional everyday examples in its lectures. The curricular language was theoretical and systematic, which constructs a vertical discourse (Bernstein, 2000), being abstract and decontextualised with some theories sharing similar ideas and compatible themes, whereas some theories argue different or even opposed standpoints. As a result, the nature of the curriculum providing a spread of alternatives could be understood to reflect a horizontal knowledge structure. In this sense, we can understand that the instructional discourse of the lectures was strongly classified, with the lecturers giving a teacher monologue to introduce and explain the theories. Correspondingly, the lectures were strongly framed, with the lecturers holding the floor all the time while the students had no chance to speak.

The impersonal place that the bi-vocal lectures were held also significantly contributed to a strongly framed discourse with respect to its regulative discourse, through which a strong hierarchical teacher-students relationship was automatically established, resulting in a teacher-centred traditional lecture that was dominated by the lecturer’s speech. Both the impersonal location and the bi-vocal lectures demanded students listened attentively. They risked falling behind the pace, because of the ease of being distracted in the huge classroom. That the bi-vocal lectures took place in an impersonal hall highlighted the continuing trend of internationalisation in UK higher education, to which Chinese international students greatly contribute. In turn, this suggests ways in which university lectures are currently responding to huge international enrolment. Perhaps lectures could be divided into two separate groups to decrease class size and to lessen distractions on

students' listening, but more implications deriving from the analysis provided in this chapter will be discussed in Chapter Five.

In contrast, the tutorials of Course A were designed to break the theoretical curricular language into more familiar everyday language and thus weakening the classification of the curriculum. This approach required students to share, exchange and discuss ideas, and thus allowed students to have more control of the class and shape a student-centred model of teaching and learning. Therefore, contrary to the lectures, the pedagogic discourse of the tutorials was weakly framed with respect to the teacher's control and classified in terms of the knowledge. Stephanie abandoned the preparatory tasks that had been designed by the main lecturer for Course A and she redesigned the preparatory questions for each tutorial in order to make the student learning and participation more accessible. This highlights the importance of allowing tutors to have considerable agency to decide how to best recontextualise the curriculum and support their students' learning.

Despite the more accessible preparatory work, the level of student discussion was still not as interactive as Stephanie had hoped and expected. Stephanie attributed this to the classroom layout which disabled the formation of proper groups. Based on her account, it seems that in order to have dialogic student group discussions, the tutor needs to make sure the classroom set-up fits with the regulative discourse. To pedagogic theory, this adds the idea that the regulative discourse which establishes forms of oral interaction should be consistent with the nature of acquiring, understanding and building the curricular knowledge that is presented in the instructional discourse.

However, the analysis of the students' interview data suggests that students' performance is a result of many interweaving factors. This includes oracy preparation before class, linguistic issues and Chinese cultural and educational scripts, all of which had an impact on students' willingness to interact. The lack of oracy preparation tells us that the condition of knowledge is the prerequisite for students to be able to participate in discussions. The preparatory work they were required to do offered them prior knowledge and some pre-emptive thinking before entering the tutorials. With these preparations and thinking

students would be able to have an effective talk and thus have a richer and more mature understanding of the theory.

The learning belief of “wu” is a new finding which helps us understand that “wu” contributes to a quieter self-learning process and resists the dominant constructivist pedagogy in the UK higher education, which strongly emphasises interaction. Relating to the Chinese ancient philosophical belief of “wu”, this finding challenges social constructivism theory, which has predominantly influenced Western higher education. Understanding the impact of “wu” may help tutors to make sense of why some Chinese students were reluctant to answer their tutor even when they had their own ideas. It enables us to see that the quieter self-learning process of “wu” resists the dominant constructivist pedagogy in the UK higher education. By understanding the meaning of “wu”, we can make sense of the potential impact it may have on Chinese international students’ verbal participation. It may also support a timely rethink of social constructivism with respect to the Chinese learning philosophical belief of “wu” and the interactive learning in class that is favoured by social constructivism.

The supportive classroom atmosphere that Stephanie created by joining in the student group conversations, scaffolding questions, making jokes and giving wait time highlights the importance of using skilful pedagogic strategies to break the silence and encourage students to think critically and speak willingly. A friendly and relaxed atmosphere can not only ease students’ anxiety around speaking, but also get students ready for teacher-students interaction. The scaffolding questions were especially helpful with respect to students’ cognitive development by weakening the classification of the knowledge and breaking down a complex issue into pieces bit by bit.

Chapter 6 Analysis of Course B

This chapter presents the analysis of Course B, which was sampled as a course based in "hard" (Yat *al.*, 2017, p. 48) sciences. This course covered the basic theory of physics principles in an applied field and used mathematical tools and measurement techniques to solve professional questions. Students were assessed not only through the final exam but also needed to work in pairs to write a design report to inform a field of professional practices. This course had a smaller enrolment than Course A, with 40 students, the majority of whom were domestic L1 students and international students from Europe, the USA and Canada. Chinese international students made up approximately 40% of the course enrolment. Course B had only one lecturer, whom I will call Bruce, who was also the only tutor for this course. Unlike Course A, Course B only had one tutorial group, which meant that all students attended the same lectures and tutorials together.

Like Chapter 5, this chapter reports the analysis of Course B's oracy demands and students' performance from the perspectives of the lecturer/tutor and the students. It will give a detailed description of the formal design, an ethnographic description of the enacted practices in classes, and then the teacher's and students' perspectives on the teaching and learning in Course B. This chapter will explore some potential causes of particular oracy patterns by probing beneath the empirical surface of classroom interaction so as to make the underlying attitudes and expectations visible.

Formal design

The formal design will be analysed through the four aspects of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and oracy demands. This analysis of the formal design aims at understanding the aims and design of the course and the teacher's expectations of oracy.

Curriculum

Course B was a course offered at both the undergraduate and master's levels. It was a core course for the fourth-year undergraduates but an elective course for postgraduates. It drew on physics and used mathematical tools to solve professional problems or to inform a particular applied field of professional practice. It presented the basic theory of a branch of physics, the nature of a physical phenomenon and how it could be affected under different situations and prepared students to understand theoretical concepts and be able to apply them using mathematical tools. It aimed to enable students to evaluate and solve problems, to implement theory that was learned in lectures, and to combine it with their personal research in a professional design. The following are the aims taken from the course outline (See Appendix 5):

> *Present the basic theory of the [subject matter] systems and the theory of [subject matter] by [subject matter] and [subject matter] of mechanical structures;*
>
> *Explain the of principles of operation of [subject matter];*
>
> *Evaluate the operation of [subject matter];*
>
> *Apply the concept of [subject matter] systems (Course B's outline)*

As this chapter will show, the curriculum for the course could be considered 'strongly classified' (Bernstein, 2000) because it developed abstract theory and specialised conceptual vocabulary was spoken throughout the lectures and tutorials. Each lecture's content built on the previous lecture.

Like Course A, Course B did not have a textbook. The lecturer, Bruce, made his own lecture slides and made these available to his students before they entered each lecture. Students could access digital copies online via moodle. In addition, Bruce printed the slides out and distributed them to his class before he started his lecture so that every student could take notes on the paper handouts during his lecture. In the same way, Bruce also made tutorial sheets available in advance so every student had a hard copy at hand.

Pedagogy

Course B was designed as two timetabled classes per week. Each class lasted an hour. It depended on Bruce to decide which class served as a lecture or a tutorial. Similar to the definition of tutorial used in Course A, the term "tutorial" was used in Course B to define classes in which students were grouped to work together. In contrast to Course A, Course B's lectures were not video recorded, though Bruce, in his second interview, said that in the next academic year, he might try to video record his lectures in advance and make them accessible online.

Based on Bernstein's (2000) definition of framing as "who controls what" (Bernstein, 2000, p. 12), Course B's lectures could be considered to be strongly framed because Bruce was dominant and in control of his lectures. His lectures were designed as teacher monologues most of the time, with a few teacher questions in between. Bruce did all the demonstrations of formulae and problems on the white board using mathematical text while lecturing. The language was theoretical and mathematical rather than everyday language. In terms of the course aims, it could be understood that the nature of the knowledge in Course B had a vertical knowledge structure (Bernstein, 2000); the lectures' instructional discourse was strongly classified with abstract concepts that were closely linked. The pedagogic discourse was also strongly framed, as Bruce was overtly in control throughout the teaching and learning process.

While the lectures gave students solid input of the subject matter, the tutorials asked students to solve questions on tutorial sheets by applying the knowledge they had acquired from the lectures and to calculate results using the relevant maths. They needed to understand the professional problems as equations and be able to apply their understanding through calculations. These tutorial questions were typically taken from previous years' exams questions to help prepare students for their final exam.

Compared to the lectures, the tutorials' design could be described as relatively 'weakly framed', with the purpose being to give students opportunities to attempt the solutions

either on their own or in pairs. Although Bruce would ultimately provide the solution on the white board, he routinely gave students 15 minutes to work on the questions either individually or in pairs before he started to show students the solution. I understood this interaction time to be designed with the aim of providing students with chances to improve their problem-solving ability and to encourage them to apply or demonstrate their theoretical knowledge in practice.

Assessment

The assessment for Course B was a combination of a final exam (80%) and a report (20%). Students were expected to be able to apply the theories they had learnt from the lectures to solve the exam questions with mathematics. In addition, students were required to prepare a report about a professional design in pairs (20%), which meant being able to engage successfully in teamwork, distributing and negotiating shared tasks. Apart from organising their tasks in their everyday language, the working pairs had to be able to speak their theoretical language to discuss how to apply theories in their professional design and negotiate an agreed solution. From this aspect, the exam assessment was concerned with strongly classified knowledge and strongly framed in the set tasks, while the assessment of the report was strongly classified with respect to professional knowledge but relatively weakly framed in terms of the freedom of design provided to the students. The combination of an individual examination and a pair task as the means of assessment did not require oracy demands to be evaluated, but had implicit oracy demands for students to be able to negotiate their pair work.

Oracy demands

The oracy demands of Course B's lectures were designed as highly listening focused. All lectures were staged as teacher monologues with few chances for teacher-student interaction. Some teacher questions were inserted into the teacher monologue, with students expected to give the correct answers. These moments reflected the typical triadic pattern (Lemke, 1990) during which the teacher interrupts the spoken text to check whether students can supply an answer. With his monologues, the lecturer could give a

detailed demonstration of a theoretical equation using mathematical language. The students needed to have good English listening ability to keep up with the pace of the teaching and understand the disciplinary knowledge and terminology. Like Course A, Course B's lectures were also supported by a visual PowerPoint display. Also, as in Course A, the PowerPoint slides were available on the course moodle before each lecture started, which not only helped students manage the listening demands, but also gave them a general idea about what would come in the next session.

The oracy demands of the tutorials were also observed to be highly focused on listening. In contrast to the lectures, though, Course B's tutorials highlighted student talk and encouraged students to work with each other in order to solve the tutorial questions. At this stage of the tutorials, as a deliberate routine, Bruce always came down from the podium and talked to his students one by one. Therefore, the design of the tutorials provided more opportunities for teacher-student interaction.

The above discussion outlines the formal design of Course B. The curriculum was of a strong classification, delivered in traditional strongly framed lectures, whereas the tutorials were purposefully designed as more weakly framed. Although Bruce still explained the solution most of the time, students were purposefully given time to work on the tutorial questions together.

The enacted lecture

This section will report on the enacted practices of Course B's lectures. The analysis will start with an ethnographic description of the classroom activity, then draw on both the teacher's and students' interview data to understand what happened in Bruce's lectures.

The ethnographic description of the lectures

The lectures always started five minutes later than the official starting time, which is a general practice across the university. Within the first ten minutes of the class, there were

usually a few students who would arrive late. Although Course B had a small enrolment compared to Course A, the attendance rate was quite low. While classes were supposed to have 40 students in total, the maximum attendance observed was only 23 students in the lecture. The numbers of Chinese international students and non-Chinese (L1 students and one European) were roughly half and half in each lecture. Before Bruce formally started his lecture, he always placed a stack of the printed PowerPoint slides on the desk of the first row and let students pick them up themselves. While Bruce was doing a solution on the white board, the handout served as a textbook, because Bruce always made it clear which page and which slide he was on before starting to demonstrate knowledge from the slides he was talking about. This pedagogic practice of mixing visual and aural input supported students to keep up with the pace of his teaching and to know exactly where he was in the course material. This teaching practice was mentioned as being highly effective by the student interviewees, which will be addressed in the later section on interview analysis.

It was observed that Bruce always lectured in close alignment with his PowerPoint slides. Sometimes he might add some examples to demonstrate his point, using hand gestures to model and demonstrate. The students were mostly quiet during his lecturing. When Bruce started to do a mathematical calculation on the board, the students typically began to take notes, copying Bruce's detailed mathematical solution from the white board. While Bruce was doing maths on the white board, he was also explaining all the time, making sure that he made every mathematical step clear. Sometimes, some students would talk quietly to the person beside them or play with their iPad or phone, for example, browsing the internet or sending text messages, while Bruce was lecturing.

In every lecture, Bruce would occasionally ask checking questions, for example, *"Any questions?", "Are you happy with that?", "Everyone's happy with that?", "That makes sense?", "Anyone want to correct me?".* Apart from asking such checking questions, in every lecture, Bruce would also ask some questions while he was doing solutions on the white board. For instance, he would ask, *"Who knows the answer?"* or *"So does anyone have an answer for me?".* He would usually wait up to three seconds to see if anyone offered the answer. If a student nodded but did not say anything, Bruce would say, "I saw somebody nod his head", prompting the student to give an answer. Student answers were

typically very short, offering just a number, for example, rather than a full explanation. Sometimes, if a student nodded but did not speak up, Bruce would ask that student for an explicit answer, telling them to *"Say it!"* so all the students could hear the answer.

However, there were times when nobody responded. As well as choosing to answer the question himself, Bruce would joke about it, saying: *"You are definitely more quiet on Monday morning."* In lectures, it was observed that it was always the same two male L1 students, Richard (R) and Sandy (S), who volunteered answers. Occasionally, these two students might include some further explanation in their answers. The other students never vocally responded to Bruce's questions, not even once, apart from a female L1 student who was observed to ask Bruce one question in class. Sandy and Richard also asked Bruce questions in class. It was observed that these occasional student questions were raised spontaneously. This might suggest that Richard and Sandy did not have any confusion when Bruce asked checking questions, but when they did have questions, they simply raised them. This might tell us that these two students were confident and aware that they could ask questions when they did not understand or when they disagreed with an answer. Since the students of Course B were assessed by the final exam, the lecture content was closely related to potential exam questions. Quite often when Bruce came to points that students needed to be careful with during the exam, he would emphasise these in a humorous way, for example, *"…and people who'll still do it wrong in the exam are probably the people who aren't here!".* It seems that Bruce wanted to remind students to be cautious about key points and to draw their attention to them in this jocular way.

To summarise, the enacted regulative discourse reflected the design of formal lecturing with the visual support of PowerPoint slides through which the teacher, Bruce, maintained control of his whole class. The students were mostly quiet, even when they were given chances to answer Bruce's occasional questions. Occasionally, students might offer a short explanation in theoretical language in response to a question. Richard and Sandy were the two students who often answered and asked questions in class. The instructional discourse was strongly classified with theoretical language used to explain certain physical phenomena and to demonstrate the relevant mathematical equations. Mathematics was of vital importance to solving the problems. The oracy demands emphasised listening to the theoretical exposition.

Why did students rarely respond to Bruce's checking questions or answer his genuine questions? Why was it always the same students who answered Bruce's questions or raised questions? What were Bruce's teaching beliefs and his attitude towards his students' performance in class, especially the Chinese international students'? These questions will be investigated in the following sections.

Lecturer's account of the lectures

As was emphasised in Bruce's interview, Course B's curriculum heavily relied on physics principles: "*My course basically recounts basic physics of [subject matter] system… So we are looking at physics of [subject matter] …"* Based on the literature (Biglan, 1973; Becher, 1994; Ruth Neumann, Parry and Becher, 2002; Jessop and Maleckar, 2016), physics falls in the 'hard' science disciplines. Knowledge of physics is understood as linear, cumulative and hierarchical, built up step by step, and quantitative in nature. Yates *et al.* (2017) specifically identify physics as being based on "the relationship between theory and observation" (p. 48). Furthermore, they stress that physics theories are constructed and tested through mathematics, observation and experimentation. Mathematics not only plays a central role in testing and deriving, but are also a primary tool in providing a descriptive language of the physical world in which physics theories build progressively on one another, at least within the same paradigm. Additionally, Neumann *et al.* (2002) argue that "hard" science knowledge is tightly structured because the concepts and principles are closely related. Through the lens of Bernstein's (2000) knowledge structures, disciplinary knowledge of physics has a strong hierarchical knowledge structure. According to Yates, mathematics is vitally important in terms of constructing physics knowledge, in contrast with Course A's knowledge, which can be expressed in theoretical linguistic language. The nature of physics knowledge suggests that the lecturer would have to explain the principles or demonstrate operations via mathematics. This relationship between physics and mathematics was evident in the observations; while Bruce was lecturing, he was doing the equivalent mathematical computations on the white board most of the time as well. This observation of mathematically constructed knowledge also resonates with the literature. For example, Bakker, Smit and Wegerif (2015) report that apart from constructing knowledge through

linguistic language, mathematics plays the role of an "analytic scaffolding" (p. 1051) in some of the "hard" sciences. We can therefore understand that for "hard" sciences, such as physics, when mathematics plays a dominant role in expressing its paradigm, oracy with respect to constructing knowledge might have to accommodate the mathematical language in order to build up the disciplinary knowledge.

As reported by Bruce, he did not "*enforce*" interaction in his lectures; the interaction between him and his students was voluntary: *"Okay. So in terms of interaction then, the course is largely traditional in the sense that it's predominantly lectures. I like to try to have some interactions but I don't enforce it"*; "*…so it's predominantly lectures where I'm giving information"*. These accounts align with what I observed, as presented in the ethnographic description section. However, Bruce would still prefer to have interactions with his students, but it took a while for students to start feeling comfortable enough to respond:

> *So during the lecture, I'll say, "Who knows this?" or ask a question, and it's funny because on day one no one would answer me. And then … half way through the semester usually a few people would start to give answers.*

This trend was also observed in the enacted classroom practices. Bruce explained that his reason for not forcing students to answer, such as by calling on someone by name, was that he was afraid that would intimidate the students: "*But I don't pick on anyone, I don't say, 'You answer this', because I think that makes people nervous, makes people too nervous. Sometimes they don't come to lectures."* This concern was perhaps understandable given that the attendance rate was already quite low. Bruce explained that if students felt they were being pushed to give answers, more of them may end up skipping the lectures:

> *Sometimes it is difficult enough to get students to go to lectures. If you start to introduce students to mechanisms that they are scared of, where they are maybe called up to the board, then I think it would probably stop a lot of them coming to the lecture. You would probably end up with two or three people who know the answer. I don't do that. So it's very much a voluntary process of interaction.*

It seemed that Bruce believed that in order to keep his students attending the lectures, interaction between the teacher and students should be voluntary rather than obligatory.

He would rather have students attend, even if it meant compromising on his desired interaction between teacher and students. He therefore made a conscious choice to initiate interactions in a gentle way. For a similar reason, he would not ask students to solve the questions on the white board in case they felt too pressured: *"And then I maybe go up to the board and I'll do the solution on the board. Again, I would not ask students to go up to the board and do the thing, because I guess my belief is that puts pressure on students."* This rationale suggests that Bruce was both conscious of his students' participation and cautious about demanding too much. Bruce expressed a compromised model of teaching and learning for lectures in which he gave information and did the demonstrations most of the time with just a few voluntary interactions between him and the students. This compromise encouraged students' willingness to attend his classes but sacrificed the additional interaction that could have been generated by a further push.

What I observed might indicate that Bruce managed a careful balancing act to get as many students as possible to come to class while subscribing to constructivist principles of interaction as active learning. The attendance rate was fairly low in his classes, and according to his opinions, he might have ended up having even fewer students come to his classes if he had enforced interaction. Even though he promoted interactions during the observations by raising questions and expecting voluntary answers, he was only prepared to "push" students this far.

Bruce's appraisal of Chinese students' performance

According to Bruce's own observation, the Chinese international students hardly ever interacted with him in his lectures: "*They almost certainly don't. It depends on the class; in this class, they don't"*. In most cases, the observed interactions happened between a domestic L1 student or an European L2 student and Bruce*: "But 95% of the time, the voluntary interaction will happen with not even just, not even a British person, but a Western person, I think is probably the safest way to put it"*. These domestic L1 students or European international students who engaged with the teacher's questions were usually "*quite confident in answering. But it's quite rare that I think that a student who is Chinese at least, or Asian, will answer"*. Bruce's account of the Chinese international students'

performance aligns with my observation that Richard (R) and Sandy (S), domestic L1 students, were the only two students who would offer to answer questions, while no Chinese international students were observed to respond vocally to Bruce at any stage.

As for any support especially tailored to his Chinese international students, Bruce said that he did not do anything special for them and had even never thought about that. In his opinion, students were to be treated the same regardless of their nationalities, although he acknowledged there could be cultural differences*: "I would like to think it's not a racial thing or anything like that, you know. Firstly, I see the classroom as a classroom, but I'm still conscious of cultural difference".* This account might suggest that Bruce was not "othering" (Leask, 2006) Chinese students. Although he was aware of the cultural differences, he did not see their reticence as problematic, which is a common belief among some Western lecturers (Doherty and Singh, 2007; Benzie, 2010; Maureen Andrade, 2010). In contrast to literature (Ballard 1987; Ng, 2007) which elicit Chinese international students as deficit or a problem for Western universities, "othering" a group of people as a whole by stereotypically judging them as opposite (Palfreyman, 2007), Bruce seemingly sought to treat all his students equally despite their various cultural backgrounds. Instead of "othering" Chinese international students, what Bruce did was to create a comfortable environment for all students without pushing any to give answers: "*And I prefer them come to lectures and sit back, quietly learning, rather than me forcing them to interact"*.

He would give students hints and gently invite them to provide answers if he had ascertained via eye contact or body language that someone knew the answer: *"I try to make eye contact with all of them and you kind of see whether some of them are, like, mouthing or nodding, and then I'll pick them a little bit. I'll say, 'It looks like you may know'"*. Otherwise, he felt that if students remained silent for whatever reasons, forcing them to give answers would only put them on the spot: *" If they don't know, it makes them look a bit whatever. If they get it wrong, if they are shy, if they just don't like speaking in front of the class, it then makes the environment uncomfortable for them"*. This account aligns with the argument by Heron and Webster (2018) that creating a positive environment for students' learning is important. In addition, Bruce's account resonates with the arguments of Alexander (2013) and Engin (2017) that it is the teacher's responsibility to create a

positive atmosphere with respect to enhancing students' oral participation. Bruce's account suggests that an encouraging regulative discourse can be crucial for classroom interaction and having a supportive regulative discourse can weaken the strong hierarchical teacher-students relationship, meaning students might be more willing to participate in the interaction.

One Chinese student was observed to ask Bruce questions after class rather than during class. In his account of this observation, Bruce stated that he felt it was more likely that Chinese international students would feel more comfortable asking questions after class, rather than take the chance in class when Bruce asked checking questions, for example, "*Everyone happy with that?*". However, Bruce also remarked that it was not just Chinese international students who asked questions after class; L1 students or European international students did, too. This was observed in later tutorials: an L1 female student asked Bruce a question after the class had ended, and in the last class, an additional tutorial dedicated to preparing the final exam, three L1 students were observed to queue up to ask Bruce questions when the tutorial had finished. Thus students, regardless of their language or cultural backgrounds, took the opportunity to ask questions after class rather than when Bruce asked for questions in class. This is an interesting interaction pattern that I will analyse based on Bruce's account in the following section.

Looking stupid…

Bruce explained the reason why he asked checking questions in each lecture. He did this purposefully in the hope of giving students chances to ask about what they did not understand:

> *I'm hopeful that if there is anything … unclear, a student will ask, I can go over it quickly, because you know, for lots of students there, at end of the lecture, not every student will have understood all that I have said.*

This account suggests that Bruce was a caring and considerate lecturer who was concerned with whether his students would understand all his teaching and welcomed them to ask about what they might not understand. Bruce emphasised further that he did this to allow students to raise any questions*: "I do it in the hope that someone is brave enough to say, 'Actually, that part wasn't … could you go over that part again?' That happens occasionally, but it's a rare thing. But I like to give the opportunity, just in case".* Even though the students seldomly asked questions, Bruce continued to offer chances for them to voice their confusion. In this way, Bruce indirectly acknowledged that the class may not necessarily be a space for students to raise whatever confused them, and it may in fact require quite a good deal of courage to raise such questions. Moreover, although Bruce emphasised in his interview his hope that students would be brave enough to raise questions and that he would be happy to go over aspects that students did not understand, he did not make this expectation explicit in class. If he had, students might have been brave enough to raise questions or to ask him to go over certain parts again. This account aligns with the literature advocating that explicit teaching (Leask, 2006) can be an effective pedagogic approach and the teacher should make their expectations or instructions explicit in class. Additionally, this finding also supports what Leask (2006) further argues, which is that it is the lecturer's/tutor's responsibility to make their expectations explicit so that students will know what to do and how they are encouraged to perform.

When asked his opinion on why most students remained silent when he asked checking question or teacher questions, Bruce suggested that they were afraid of looking stupid in front of their classmates: *"Yeah, that's the main issue, people don't want to look stupid"*. According to Bruce, students may worry that if they raise a basic question, they may be devalued by their classmates: *"So if they ask basic questions, I wouldn't have an issue answering it. But I think again, that would undermine or potentially rank them with their peers a little bit".* Therefore, in Bruce's view, this risk or concern about asking a "stupid question" prevented students from raising issues to a large extent: *"I asked why some of them don't like interactions. There are social mechanisms, some of them are shy, some of them don't want to appear to be stupid in front of their peers".*

In terms of the concern about asking a "stupid question" or "looking stupid", Bruce told me in the interview that in his mind, there were no such things as "stupid questions". What students were worried about reflected that knowledge was hierarchical. As Bruce noted: "*Of course there is levels of knowledge"*. Some students may know more about the course and the material, while others may not have an as solid understanding as those "*confident students*": "*Usually the ones asking questions are the best students and they are confident, so they know, understand 90% of the course. They know they understand"*.

This consideration of different "levels of knowledge" reflects the nature of the disciplinary knowledge of Course B and its hierarchical knowledge structure (Bernstein, 2000). In contrast with Course A's more problematic knowledge, the hierarchical knowledge structure of the disciplinary knowledge in Course B was more systematic; the curriculum required students to be able to obtain the right answer by building on previous learning. There was usually only one correct answer to the questions on the tutorial sheets. A certain answer would be arrived at through rigorous mathematical computation and the application of the principles of physics.

This vertically layered knowledge structure indicates that a poor understanding at one level can impede the subsequent steps in learning the curriculum. Asking a question to achieve understanding at one stage is therefore critical to understanding further stages, but it is also very exposing for the student. According to Bruce, the "best" or most "confident" students had reached a higher level of course knowledge than their less confident peers. These considerations imply that the nature of the curricular knowledge has to be taken into account to understand the interaction pattern. Because, as was argued earlier, physics is cumulative and quantitative in nature, allowing knowledge to be built brick by brick, students have to achieve a certain level of knowledge in order to ask higher cognitive questions. Thus, students who lack a good understanding of Course B's material might be afraid to ask questions or might not even know what to ask.

Why was it so rare to see Chinese students speaking in class and what were their attitudes towards Bruce's oracy demands? The following section presents the students' accounts of

their own performances.

Students' accounts of the lectures

There were five students interviewed: four Chinese international students and one L1 student. All of them were interviewed near the end of the semester. The following analysis comes from my student interview data.

> *K: But for sure it is good to answer questions because the class would be more interactive and have a better classroom atmosphere. But I think that it may be because when we were kids, we had very different educational values and we Chinese are a bit shy. We dare not speak out.*

As this student's account suggests, one factor that could hinder Chinese students from either raising questions when given opportunities or answering the teacher's questions in the lectures was the cultural impact of Chinese educational scripts.

Chinese cultural impact-- losing face and being humble

K is a Chinese international student who was born in 1997, which means that like other students who were born in the early 1990s or in the 1980s, she was educated under what she called a quite "repressive" environment. According to K, the classes she grew up with would not start until the teacher gave an official instruction: *"I think my primary school classes were very repressive. … you had not sit well while the teacher came in, and when the teacher came in and said, "Stand up!", you stood up".* She recalled little interaction in her primary school classroom: *"So the class was repressive from the very beginning, and nobody spoke"*. According to K, this was because classroom routines set an environment at the beginning of the class, and within this rigid routine, the teacher would be unlikely to cultivate an interactive dynamic. Her classmates were reluctant to speak in class and may have worried that if they answered, their answers might be wrong: *"And we were afraid of saying something wrong, mainly because we said something"* which could cause a sense of "losing face" in their eyes: "*If they are wrong, foreign (L1 and European) students wouldn't feel [they are] losing face. But Chinese students think so"*.

According to her account, Chinese students and L1 students hold very different educational values, which leads to quite different classroom performances: *"But in China, there is an attitude/belief/value that it's losing face if you say something wrong. I think many Chinese students have this thought and worry about giving wrong answers"*. This aligns with the literature (Bodycott and Walker, 2000; Holmes, 2005; Young, 2017; Fei and Shabdin, 2019) that argues that Chinese international students might worry about losing face and thus do not want to interact in class. Even today, there are still Chinese international students who report that they are afraid to answer because of their concern about "losing face" according to my student interviewees. It is notable that some Chinese international students remain unwilling to speak in class even as time passes, which contradicts some studies' findings that students gain confidence to speak over time (Doherty and Singh, 2007; Benzie, 2010; Maureen Andrade, 2010). In these studies, Chinese international students were typically quiet in terms of classroom interactions, but gradually, after a few classes, they get used to the interactive environment and develop confidence to speak in front of others either within a group or in front of the whole class.

Another student, named J here, gave his reasons for why Chinese international students did not answer the teacher's questions. In his view, Chinese students were modest:

R: But would you voluntarily do the solutions on board?

J: I wouldn't.

R: Why?

J: Because Chinese people are humble.

Although doing a solution on the board is not oral interaction, it is still a form of interaction between teacher and students that is carried out through mathematical language. This allows students to think independently rather than listen to the teacher all the time. Student K also referred to the Chinese virtue of remaining "humble", explaining that Chinese students are strongly influenced by their cultural and educational scripts, which speak highly of humility. While being an attentive listener is encouraged, being an active speaker in class might not align with this cultural expectation. As she said, this value of humility had been encouraged since they were children and helps explain why no Chinese students answered Bruce in his lectures:

R: But you could have asked him when you were falling behind the pace.

K: But generally, I don't think Chinese students would ask that.

R: Why?

K: [laughing] I think it is because Chinese are all very shy, as you can see. But those foreign [L1 and European] students, they are all willing to ask the teacher questions. For example, the teacher may ask a very simple question and we Chinese students all know the answer, but we wouldn't say. But the foreign students would happily answer, even if it was a very simple question. We are different, you know. Foreign students may be brought up in this kind of environment that encourages you to ask if you have questions. If you know, you just answer naturally. But Chinese students' educational values are different. We were educated that you need to be humble, and when you were in school, as a kid, there would be a situation that … every class would have a student who very much liked to answer the teacher's questions. In this case, there would be students laughing at him/her. In China, we have this phenomenon: (laughing) people would say, "Is there any point in answering such [kind of basic] question?" Like that. So I think our values are very different.

In this exchange, K made a vivid and broad comparison between the UK's educational values and her deeply ingrained Chinese values regarding education and socialisation. By K's account, the value of humility might also cause students to laugh at and think less of those who do answer, particularly if the question is basic. This "laughing at" behaviour is consistent with Bruce's comments about students' worry about "looking stupid". This emphasis on the value of humility may indicate that Chinese international students' performance can be explained by the influence of their home cultural values. Given the cultural importance of humility, Chinese international students' performance can be influenced by such beliefs, which can shape their own model of teaching and learning (Bernstein, 2000). They might thus be constrained by the belief in being humble and hence tend to be a quieter learner in class, even if the lecturer/tutor expects and even encourages them to respond vocally.

Based on K's account that in China some students might be mocked for answering some questions, the value of humility has a potential connection with the cultural concept of "losing face". A student can always choose the safe route of remaining quiet and not answering the teacher, then justifying this choice by citing the value of humility. This performance of silence prevents students from losing face in front of their classmates. These cultural considerations in tandem thus help explain the prevailing silence in class: *"It's good that you don't answer. If you answered in China, you would be seen as an outcast" (Student K*).

Giving an account which resonates with J's and K's opinions, another Chinese student, H, explained that he would like to stay in a humble position:

> *Yes, I think I'm that kind of person who wouldn't show off, even if I know the answer. Some people are willing to [answer]. Some people who desire to show off would like to respond, but those who do not wouldn't.*

In H's point of view, students who like to interact with their teacher display a "show off" personality. It seems that H saw active students responding to the teacher as performing or showing off rather than participating in a common classroom interaction for learning. This shows that he had a shared belief with his other Chinese classmates, J and K. H similarly referred to the value of humility, explaining that he avoided "showing off" and chose to be a silent listener. However, in other settings with a constructivist pedagogy, apart from being a capable listener, students have been encouraged to verbally interact with their teachers since they entered school. From this point of view, it would make sense that the domestic L1 students might be more used to responding to their teacher and thus some L1 students seemed more comfortable with answering teacher questions in class, as was observed.

It is interesting to note that the Chinese international students who were interviewed did know and understand the importance of classroom interaction with their lecturer. They had the awareness that interaction helps with the teaching and learning process, they knew Bruce wanted them to speak, and they understood the benefits behind Bruce's expected oracy demands:

K: But for sure it is good to answer questions, because the class would be more interactive and there would be a better classroom atmosphere.

From this account, we can understand that some Chinese international students did know when their UK lecturer/tutor wanted them to vocally engage, and they did acknowledge the benefits interaction could bring. However, this acknowledgement might not be persuasive enough to make them engage interactively. It indicates that their awareness of being expected to engage orally had to compete with other factors:

L: But raising this kind of question means he bridge the communication between him and us, at least suggesting that if you have any questions, just ask. But in China, such a thing wouldn't happen for sure. Of course, I can't say that it wouldn't happen absolutely.

Both K and L were aware of Bruce's expectation of eliciting answers from them or receiving students' questions, but they chose not to interact: *"But I think that it may be because when we were kids, we had very different educational values and we Chinese are a bit shy. We dare not speak out" (student K).* From this account we can infer that their home educational experience has instilled them with quiet habits or the model of quiet learners and talkative teachers.

Student H also addressed this home learning habit of students being used to sitting in the lectures and listening: *"Habit. When I was in China, I was like this as well. Because there were students who would answer, and I didn't like to answer".* Contrary to K, according to H's account, although many students tend to be quiet, there were still Chinese international students who would like to speak or answer questions in class. The two extracts from student K's and L's interviews suggest that Chinese international students did understand their British teacher's model of teaching and learning, but under the influence of their home model of teaching and learning, they would rather be quiet listeners than active speakers. On top of that, it is possible to conclude that the Chinese cultural value of humility and losing face hinders the enactment of a constructivist theory of learning that advocates interaction in class.

Looking stupid…

Some student interviewees' accounts resonate with what Bruce mentioned in his interviews: the "confident" student answered, but other students may have been afraid of sounding stupid in front of their peers. For example, a student, W, said: *"It's about the percentage of assurance of the answer. It might be 10%, 20% or 70/80% confidence, but I wouldn't answer, because I'm not sure whether I'm right, maybe I'm wrong".* His opinion aligns with Bruce's account that those "confident" students answered because they knew the material better and they had good knowledge of the course. Because of the nature of the knowledge of Course B, when Bruce sought an answer from his student, he usually expected "the" answer (Student K: "*Because there was only one answer").* If a "confident" student answered, he/she probably knew that he/she would be right.

Student L's account also resonated with Bruce's words. When asked why he never raised his questions when Bruce gave them chances, he said:

> *For me, I may not be able to digest his teaching content in class and I may need spend more time after class. So, when he asked, "Do you have questions?", we did, but what can I say: "Can you repeat all of what you said?" [laughing] This is unrealistic. And this question is stupid. He just explained it a minute ago and you ask him to say that again.*

L's account indicates that the oracy problem can be linked to the larger issue of comprehension; some students may not keep up with Bruce's pace and may fall behind quite a bit. In other words, it was not a matter of them having no questions, but rather a matter of comprehension, since they did not understand at all what had just been explained. This report reveals important considerations about knowledge structure. Because of Course B's particular hierarchical knowledge system, students had to learn through subsequent steps which required them to be able to move from concept to concept through the vehicle of mathematics. Thus, students would rather spend more time figuring it out on their own than ask Bruce in class: "*So this is inappropriate, so we had to learn after class" (L).* Even if the students knew that they had the right to ask questions and Bruce encouraged them to do so, they would not see their questions as legitimate. Student

K reported*: "If the teacher answers all the questions, then there'll be no time for the rest of the class. 90% of the content of class won't be taught".* This may explain why some students did not ask questions in class and may also suggest that the nature of the curriculum knowledge should be taken into account when we investigate classroom interactional patterns. Because of the strongly hierarchical knowledge structure (Biglan, 1973; Becher, 1994; Ruth Neumann, Parry and Becher, 2002; Jessop and Maleckar, 2016), the class might not necessarily be constructed through a high demand of oral interactions between the teacher and students, but rather it may be heavily constructed through mathematical demonstration and demands good comprehension in physical knowledge building (Yates *et al.,* 2017).

A female Chinese student, K, reported: *"There was a time I really didn't know something. I told him and asked him [after class]. But after I asked him, I found that my question was silly. I shouldn't have asked. [laughing]*". It is interesting to see that even if a Chinese student asks his/her question and gets an answer from the teacher, he/she may later reflect and feel silly to have asked such a "simple" question. This account indicates that some Chinese international students do have a concern of being negatively evaluated by their peers or the teacher to some extent. This worry could affect their in-class performance and may even have an inevitable impact on them after class.

In terms of taking up too much class time, other students raised this concern with regard to asking questions:

I: *Sometimes if you have a question, you don't kind of want to break the lecture, if you kind of go through something, or if you've got a question isn't really related to the content, like the previous chapter or whatever.* (L, a domestic L1 student)

J*: Firstly, it might take up much class time, because my questions might not necessarily be the same as other students' questions. Secondly, we might interrupt the teacher's teaching pace. [Secondly,] Teachers in China all teach very fast and intensely. The tasks that UK university gave to my Chinese university were quite heavy.*

It can be understood that the rejection of the chances to ask student questions or answer teacher questions is a complex issue. It is influenced by not only cultural and educational values, but also other social factors, for example, how students view their pedagogic relation with their teacher, as well as their peers. Specifically, students have their own models of teaching and learning, which regulates their performance in class and shapes their judgements about whether it is legitimate to ask or answer questions, when it is legitimate to speak in class and what is legitimate to say in terms of teacher-students interaction. This could explain that although the Chinese international students knew their lecturer Bruce's oral interaction expectation and were aware of the benefits of Bruce's model of teaching and learning with respect to the desired oracy demands, they may still have chosen to respond in the appropriate way that they had been used to in their home country. The home educational and cultural values that Chinese international students carry and their own evaluation of legitimate interactions under the influence of social concerns, like worrying about looking stupid or interrupting the pedagogic pace, are interwoven together to shape their own model of teaching and learning. Therefore, instead of asking questions in class, students may prefer to ask after class or *"even by email"* (student L), or to figure out the answers to their questions by themselves. The gap between Chinese international students' model of teaching and learning and Bruce's model of teaching and learning contributed to the particular classroom interaction pattern.

Tutorials

This section provides an analysis of the oracy demands and students' performance in Course B's tutorials. Before an investigation of the classroom interaction, a detailed ethnographic description will be provided in order to present the dynamic flow of the teaching and learning process in the tutorials.

The ethnographic description of tutorials

Similar to Course B's lectures, the tutorials always started five minutes later than the set time, and there were always students who arrived late for the class. The attendance rate of the tutorials was even lower than the lectures', ranging from 10 to 15 people throughout all the observed tutorials. The locations for tutorials were the same as the lectures, either

in the lecture hall of 10 rows of seats or in the small rectangular classroom. The allocation of students of different backgrounds were very much the same as in the lectures. For example, if the tutorial took place in the lecture hall, the Chinese students always sat in the front rows, while the domestic L1 male students always stuck together and sat in the last row. As a result, the first three or four rows were occupied by Chinese international students who sat in pairs, whereas the fourth or fifth rows were occupied by L1 male students who sat together. Throughout the semester that I observed, in every lecture or tutorial, the two L1 female students always sat together in the middle of Chinese students, whereas the only European student always sat alone in the middle of the classroom.

The tasks for the tutorials were not to solve equations on the white board as was done by Bruce in the lectures, but to solve the problems on the tutorial sheets. The most significant difference compared to Bruce's lectures was that in each tutorial, Bruce would give his class 15 minutes to discuss the tutorial questions by saying, *"You can chat to the person next to you".* Students were thus encouraged to talk and work out the answers together. It was observed that this interactive process was voluntary, because some Chinese students did not talk at all with the person next to them, but rather chose to do the work on their own. Bruce did not enforce the interaction between students. The noise mostly came from the L1 students and some speaking at low volumes among the Chinese international students. During the students' working time, Bruce came down from the podium to check how his students were doing with the solutions. For example, he came to each pair or group and asked them, *"Are you okay?", "How are you doing?", "Did you manage?", "You worked it out?"* and so on. This gave his students a chance to ask him questions within their groups and he would scaffold them by giving them a hint, for example, *"Have you tried …?", "What about…"* and so on. It was observed that Bruce made sure that he checked every student and if students did not have any problems, he would quietly walk away and move on to the next student.

It was also observed that Bruce spent most of the time talking with the L1 male students. Sometimes Bruce asked them about general issues like classroom business (Lemke, 1990). This non-academic talk also took place between Bruce and the L1 female students after he checked their work on the tutorial questions. When the students' working time ended, Bruce would draw the class' attention back to himself and do the whole solution on the

white board. During this time, the whole class would take down notes while listening and watching him demonstrate the solution step by step. As it happened in the lectures, in the middle of the solution demonstration or when he had finished his explanation, Bruce would ask checking questions: *"Any questions?", "Everyone's happy with that?"* and so on. Usually, there would be no vocal response from the students, but some of them, both Chinese and non-Chinese students, sometimes nodded their heads to show that they understood. In the first observed tutorial, a domestic L1 student, Steve, asked a question – *"Why is it twice the loudness as the altitude?"* – while Bruce was doing the solution on board. Bruce explained to him that altitude was volume. It was a student question spontaneously raised by a student without much hesitation. Again, this behaviour of a student asking question was only observed among the L1 students. In the middle of doing a solution during the last observed tutorial, when Bruce asked the whole class, *"It seems right?",* L1 student Andy answered immediately, *"Yes".* During Bruce's demonstration, similar to the situation in the lectures, some students occasionally checked their phones and some talked quietly to the person beside them. By the time Bruce had finished all the questions he had set for that day's tutorial, he would end his class by saying: *"Okay, let's stop here", "I think we can finish here today"* or *"See you on Monday/Thursday".*

Based on this detailed ethnographic description of the tutorials, the following section will present an in-depth analysis of the oracy demands of the tutorials and the corresponding students' performance in classes.

Tutor's account of the tutorials

The biggest difference in terms of pedagogic practices between lectures and tutorials was that in tutorials, Bruce purposefully encouraged students to work out the answers to the questions in pairs. It was observed that in each tutorial, he allowed students to spend 15 minutes on working out the questions. Students were encouraged to chat with each other to see whether they could help each other get the solution, or they could choose to do the questions on their own if they wanted to. Asked what the purpose of doing this was, Bruce explained that firstly, he wanted to balance the whole class, because students of different levels had different degrees of preparation. The 'good' students may already have done all

the questions at home, while a few students may never even have looked at the questions before class. In this way, he was making an effort to bring the pace of the whole class to a middle ground:

> *In the tutorial, you have some of the good students who have done all the questions already, preparing all the answers. And then you have some students who will not even look at the questions, so there is always balance teaching about how much you make a student work for the answer before you give it to them as well.*

In addition, the less prepared students would have had chances to think about the questions and the "good" students would also have something to do by helping those who were having difficulty solving the questions:

> *Students can help each other learn as well. The good students can teach the ones that are less strong as well. It's also an efficient way of helping them learn, I think. And also, if you've got students, the good students sitting there have everything written already. If they are sitting next to the students who haven't, that gives them something to do.*

That "good" students could help "less strong" students suggests that Bruce was applying the constructivist principle (Vygotsky, 1978). A student can have a better understanding and acquire new knowledge with the support of an adult or a more capable peer. Therefore, allowing students to talk with each other applies Vygotsky's social constructivist principle, and thus students' learning efficiency may also be improved. According to Bruce, this constructivist process of learning not only contributed to the "less strong" students in his class, but also helped "good" students' learning:

> *And also teaching is a good way of learning. If you teach something, it gives you a perspective on it and it's a very good way of learning something. I think it helps the social dynamic and I think it just helps students on average learn better.*

Bruce's opinion that teaching is a good way of learning resonates with Lemke's (1990) argument that only when students put words together to formulate questions with arguments, reasoning and even generalising can they learn how to talk in science.

Additionally, Bruce's beliefs regarding students teaching aligns with Stigmar's (2016) research on peer teaching in higher education, which suggests that peer teaching helps develop disciplinary knowledge.

However, Bruce also mentioned that he did not know how often the "good" students teaching the "less strong" students actually happened:

> *If you want to learn something properly, if you teach it, 'cause it really shows where your gaps and knowledge are, because people will ask you questions you haven't thought of and things like that. So it is beneficial in terms of that. But I don't know how often that actually happens, because quite often the good students all stick together, so I notice in the classes, I know where the good students [are] … but in theory you have stronger students help weaker students a bit.*

It is interesting to note that although Bruce wished his "good" students could teach the "less strong" ones, he doubted how often that could actually happen, as the "good" ones usually sat together. Also, as he further stated: *"This is the social dynamic, and I have no control of it".* In his opinion, he could not change the way the students always stuck with the same groups of friends. However, Arkoudis *et al*. (2013) argue that tutors can break the social dynamic by changing the students' seats. This indicate that tutors could change the student groups, if they wanted. Lecturers/tutors could try to encourage students to mix together rather than allowing them to always sit in their friendship groups.

Giving students some interactive time would enable them to think on their own actively, rather than passively receiving the solution from Bruce:

> *So instead of giving them the answer, I can say, I can just give them a little bit of a hint and get their brain working. So instead of giving the answer – I can say, "Here is the answer", they don't try, they just take it and they are less likely to learn.*

In this way, Bruce would allow students who had not done any preparation to explore the knowledge on their own or with their peers during the discussion time. Moreover, this period of thinking and discussing time also allowed Bruce to have a chance to talk with his students face to face and one to one:

Some of the weaker students may, as I said, get stuck in some parts. I can then, when I'm going down, if they say, "I get part A right, [but] I can't get part B", I can look at them and say "If you have thought about this…"

In this way, as well as benefiting from their peers' scaffolding, students can still gain support from their tutor when they face any challenges while solving tutorial questions:

So it's really about giving the opportunity to work through a period of time. We try to help them identify which parts are the most difficult for them and help them to get through that.

Similar to peers' scaffolding, this teacher-student one to one interaction also applied Vygotsky's social constructivism into practice. This purposefully designed students' interaction time suggests that Bruce highly valued oracy in tutorials. He gave credit to students' interaction with regards to problem-solving and constructing knowledge together. It seems that Bruce agreed with the belief in the importance of oracy and had a high demand of oral interaction in his tutorials.

Tutor's pedagogic strategy

Although Bruce did not enforce interaction, letting students participate to the degree they desired, like Course A's tutor, Stephanie, he often made jokes to ease the silent atmosphere. For example, both in his lectures and tutorials he joked when nobody answered his questions: "*You're definitely quieter on Monday morning*", or he might say, *"Does that blow your mind away?", "Surprise anyone in this room? Probably surprises me"* and so on. When asked why he made jokes in class, Bruce gave two reasons. The first was to keep students alert and from getting bored, especially during a lecture, which was all teacher monologue:

I think if you're sitting down for an hour, listening to me talking, I have to, or try to make it a bit entertaining. Otherwise if you are bored in a lecture, you just don't listen. *So I make it a bit more interesting and maybe a bit funny.*

By making the class a bit humorous then, Bruce hoped to keep more of the students' attention. This strategy, in turn, would enhance students' listening. Otherwise, if students got bored or felt asleep, the listening demands would be jeopardised and as a result, students would fall behind and might even have poor comprehension of the topic.

From Bruce's point of view, teacher jokes could enable more student engagement in lectures and tutorials: *"Maybe you can try a bit more engaging, you can try to be a bit humorous, a bit more approachable, a bit less formal".* Therefore, with these jokes, the atmosphere would be livelier and students might be more willing to interact with their teacher. This account aligns with Heron and Webster's (2018) finding because such jokes can break the silence and make students feel less intimidated: *"And again, it comes back to encouraging them to interact with you and not be a scary academic lecture type" (Bruce*). This suggests that teacher jokes may enhance the oracy demands on both listening and speaking. By adopting a humorous strategy, not only can students' attention be maintained, but also, they may be more interactively involved in teacher-student interaction, as well as more willing to engage in the student interaction that was demanded in Bruce's tutorials.

Secondly, Bruce believed that classes should be fun: "*It's also about the social dynamic and trying to get everything a bit more relaxed, I guess"*. By making jokes, he would also amuse himself: *"I do it for myself as well, though, because I find I enjoy doing it when I do it. It makes my class less formal"*. From this point of view, a fun and informal classroom atmosphere might establish a regulative discourse with less hierarchical and more friendly teacher-student relationship. Embedded in this regulative discourse, a more interactive instructional discourse might contribute to this informal atmosphere. It can be inferred that the humour plays an effective role in bringing the teacher and students together and setting up a regulative discourse in which a friendlier classroom environment can be cultivated, and it thus regulates the instructional discourse to be more interactive, as more students can be observed voluntarily interacting with their teacher and peers.

Based on Bruce's account, it can be concluded that he expected higher oracy demands for speaking within his tutorials than for his lectures. He believed that such interaction was important in terms of enabling students' thinking and improving learning. This interaction gave the students chance to scaffold their peers and allowed Bruce himself to support his students. The strategy of using humour played a good role in enhancing the oracy demands by helping students concentrate on the teaching and encouraging them to engage in the interaction process. Additionally, since this humorous strategy can make the class more fun and relaxing, it can be inferred that a friendly feeling learning environment could be

created and thus students may have a greater sense of security. This further resonates with Heron and Webster's (2018) argument that creating a positive learning atmosphere is as vital as making academic expectations explicit. Therefore, we might arrive at the suggestion that the strategy of teacher jokes might help to build up a "less formal" regulative discourse, embedded in which an instructional discourse of interactive dialogue could take place.

Students' accounts of the tutorials

Two important themes with respect to interaction can be drawn from the students' accounts of the tutorials. First, they found oracy beneficial and student talk as especially good for their studies within these classes. Second, a lack of good knowledge of the curriculum would hinder the student interaction and thus would jeopardise the overall quality of student interaction in the tutorials.

Talking as beneficial

The student interviewees from Course B, all addressed the idea that the interaction time in the tutorials helped. Domestic L1 student, L, reported that the students' discussion allowed them to think rather than to passively receive the teacher's input by sitting there and listening:

> *L: Yeah, I think that can be helpful, because if it's something you are not sure about or even just kind of makes you think during the lecture rather than just kind of listening. Um, so kind of getting motivation, I think. And also it's nice to discuss with people.*

L's account suggests that the talk between students gave them the chance to take a break from the teacher monologue so that they could think independently and also to work out the answers together with their peers. It could be understood that this discussion opportunity enabled individual thinking as well as co-operation on problem-solving and, as a result, students were capable of working out tutorial questions together. This process of discussion, according to L, could help them understand the knowledge better: *"I think so. A little bit. I think you just think about something yourself rather than just let him tell you*

everything. Make sure you understand each bit". What L mentioned here resonates with Bruce's belief regarding demanding students' talk/discussion in tutorials: *"And also teaching is a good way of learning. If you teach something, it gives you a perspective on it and it's a very good way of learning something"*. Just as Bruce described, when students were given the opportunity to talk with each other in his tutorials, they were practicing the teaching process, which enabled them and their partner to understand the knowledge and the curriculum better.

Similarly, Chinese international student K also gave credit to the student discussions in the tutorials. For her, studying within pairs or groups could improve her learning efficiency in class:

> *K: It is [helpful]! I very much like to work together. I dislike working alone very much. Because with two people together, one can always think of something that the other one can't. Because it is certain that you would spend more time [on a task] than if you were working in pairs. I think it would be enough when he gave 15 minutes for two people. But if it was one person, then you need more time and hence it would slow down the pace of the class. So I think it's good. And you have discussion time.*

According to K, because two people with different ideas could support each other and work out problems together, this enhanced the learning efficiency, creating a better situation than if individuals were working on tutorial questions. Therefore, in her opinion, the purposefully given chance for students to talk benefits classroom teaching and learning; one student can learn from the other and the "good" student could support the "less strong" one. It is through interaction that students would be able to explain, to think and to teach so that they knew how well they understood the knowledge and thus knew where their strengths and weaknesses were with respect to the knowledge. This interactive process allowed students to reflect on their understanding and consequently promote their learning.

Moreover, during this student discussion period of time, students would also have opportunities to interact with their tutor one to one. This gave room for students to ask questions privately:

J: Um, he would give us some time to think and work on questions and during this time, he wouldn't stand there waiting, but rather, he came down and checked every one of us. And also to see whether we had any questions, and we could ask them privately/individually with him. I think this is a very good thing.

This suggests that students who dared not ask student questions might be willing to ask them one to one during the interaction time. From this point of view, the purposefully designed students' talk time in tutorials gave students opportunities to communicate with both their peers and the tutor. This was a crucial interactive process by which students would have more chances to discuss, to question, to learn, to think and to teach in class.

Lack of knowledge…

However, one student, L, raised an issue related to the quality of student discussion. If both students lacked the relevant knowledge, then it would be hard for them to have a discussion:

The reason I say Bruce has tried his best, but we couldn't do it is because every time he asked us to discuss, to have interactions, we also wanted to do it, but because of the lack of knowledge and the problem of language, we were hindered from doing it.

As student L mentioned, a lack of knowledge prevented him and his partner from having a quality discussion. Without a high level of knowledge, students would not be capable of producing talk in order to solve the tutorial questions. As was explained earlier in the section on formal design, Course B's knowledge was a vertical knowledge structure, meaning students had to reach a certain level of the curriculum knowledge to be able to apply the physical operations and get the answer. L further emphasised knowledge acquired through a solid understanding of the principles of physics step by step:

You know the courses in our discipline are very systematic. If you don't understand the first class, and still don't understand the second class, then I can tell you for sure that the rest of the classes, you won't understand. I'm 100% sure that you won't understand. It is culminated little by little, unlike other courses, although I haven't attended other courses, but I hear from my friends who study business. They said if

you only attend classes from the middle of the semester, if you work hard in the middle of the course, then you can still understand what is happening in the rest of course. You won't be totally lost. But maybe it is because that [subject matter] is always like a chain of rings, chained one by one, if you can't follow the first and second, then you won't make sense of the rest.

What L said aligns with Bernstein's (2000) knowledge structure. The "hard" disciplinary knowledge falls into his hierarchical knowledge structure category, and from this theoretical lens, unlike the "soft" disciplinary Course A, the knowledge of Course B was more systematic and layered. Physics knowledge is understood as linear, cumulative and quantitative because it is built up brick by brick. Yates *et al.* (2017) especially stress that physical theories are constructed and tested through mathematics, observation and experimentation. Mathematics not only plays a central role in testing and deriving, but is also a primary tool in providing descriptive language for the physical world in which physical theories build progressively on top of one another. Therefore, in order to solve certain questions or problems, apart from using mathematical tool as a vehicle, students needed to have a firm foundation starting from the very basic to the upper levels. It also suggests that the students' socialisation and their level of knowledge of hard science make them resistant to the more interactive design of Bruce's tutorials.

This indicates that in order to interact with the tutor, either to give answers or to raise questions, students have to be familiar with the disciplinary knowledge to a certain level. In other words, it implies that in HE, "hard" disciplines like Course B might be unlikely to rely heavily on oral interaction with regards to exchanging personal experience, opinions, ideas or discussion and arguments in the ways that the "soft" disciplines are perceived as doing. The theoretical implication of this is that the instructional discourse where disciplinary knowledge is transmitted and constructed can influence the regulative discourse in which different forms of pedagogic approaches take place, like lecturing, teacher-student interaction, student-student interaction, experiments and so on. In other words, the instructional discourse can shape the way a lecturer/tutor and students interact, which resonates with Neumann's (2001) finding that the specific disciplinary context can shape the pedagogic practices. This can be a significant implication, given the limitation of Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse (2000). According to Bernstein, regulative discourse is the dominant discourse where the instructional discourse is embedded, however Bernstein has not taken into account that the instructional discourse can flow the

opposite way in influencing the forms of regulative discourse. As a result, this opposite effect can directly contribute to different oral interactions that are manifested in different pedagogic approaches. This instructional discourse effect on the regulative discourse will be also addressed in my Chapter of Conclusion.

Conclusion

This chapter has given a detailed description of Course B with respect to its formal design and enacted classroom practices. It has provided a thorough analysis of the oracy demands and students' performance. The curriculum was strongly classified because the nature of the curricular knowledge was of a hierarchical knowledge structure, consisting of a series of physical principles connected to one another. The lectures were strongly framed in a form of traditional teacher-centred lecturing. As in Course A, Course B's lecturer was in dominant control of the classroom talk. Occasionally, he asked for an answer in front of the whole class, expecting students to volunteer answers. As a result, the oracy demands of the lectures were listening focused, as there was little students' talk taking place. This implies that for "hard" sciences, like physics, when mathematics plays an important role in grasping its paradigm, vocal interaction with respect to constructing knowledge might have to largely accommodate the mathematical language in order for the students to understand physics.

In contrast, the tutorials were of a relatively higher oracy demand in terms of speaking/talk. Students were purposefully given ten minutes to talk with their peers to work out answers to questions together. The discussion time also allowed students to have conversations with Bruce. In this aspect, the framing was relatively weak compared with the lectures. However, differently from the discussion in Course A's tutorials, in which students exchanged ideas and their personal experience, the discussion in Course B was more constructed, being based around mathematical language and physical equations. Because the knowledge of Course B was vertical and sought the right answer/one truth, students who did not acquired a certain level of the curriculum knowledge found it harder to engage with the discussions. This highlights that the nature of the disciplinary knowledge should be taken into consideration when investigating students' oral performance, because the

instructional discourse where disciplinary knowledge is constructed can influence the regulative discourse where different forms of interactions can take place. This could be a significant implication that enhances Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse (2000) by acknowledging that although it may be embedded in the regulative discourse, the instructional discourse can also affect the regulative discourse and thus shape its pedagogic practices which, in turn, will lead to particular interactive activities and so contributes to the oracy demands. Additionally, according to Bruce, his course experience highlighted the importance of peer teaching as a good way of learning.

Many interviewed Chinese international students accounted for their reluctance to talk as related to feeling afraid of looking stupid and the impact of deeply-embedded cultural and educational scripts they were accustomed to. Some students were scared that their questions might be stupid and thus did not ask any in class when they were given the chances. The Chinese cultural value of being humble was mentioned by quite a few students, an interesting and important finding. It suggests that humility may have a link with the issue of "losing face"; being humble can help students avoid being negatively evaluated by their peers for giving wrong answers or asking a "stupid" question. Additionally, most Chinese international students were educated in the context of teacher-centred lecturing since childhood. Through Bernstein's (2000) theoretical lens of the model of the teacher and the learner, the factors of culturally and educationally "losing face" and humility are interwoven together with the acknowledgement of disciplinary knowledge, and they shaped Chinese international students' model of teaching and learning, which in turn could affect the lecture/tutor's pedagogic practices. Also, referring back to the finding on the traditional Chinese educational belief of "wu" (Chapter 5), we may understand that Chinese international students may be more willing to be silent, because of a belief that learning does not have to be externalised and vocal, but can be experienced self-reflectively and inwardly. From this point of view, if learning can be internal and answering or asking questions might potentially lead to a sense of "losing face", it is understandable that students may prefer to be silent.

From Bruce's account, we may understand that, although explicit teaching has been advocated, some lecturers still might not be aware of this pedagogic strategy, or they may know it but not apply it into their teaching practices. We also may have to reinforce this explicit teaching in teacher education. If we want to have a more interactive class, we have to engage our students explicitly to understand that. Lecturers/tutors can try to make it explicitly clear that students are encouraged to speak and are welcome to raise questions. The Chinese cultural influence implies that lecturers/tutors should understand their students from a social cultural perspective. It is important for a lecturer or tutor to develop an understanding of these cultural constraints and to develop a range of strategies that do not serve only one type of learning model but is flexible and allows for students to learn the model that may be expected in the UK system.

Last but not least, a relaxing or even fun classroom atmosphere can be created by the use of humours. This positive environment seems to be as important as explicit teaching because it can weaken the hierarchical teacher-students relationship that is generated by the regulative discourse. Within a friendly regulative discourse, students can gain a sense of security and are thus more likely to engage in vocal interactions and contribute to the teacher's expected oracy demands. Some of these themes will be reconsidered in the next chapter where I turn to the last of the three courses.

Chapter 7 Analysis of Course C

This chapter presents the analysis of Course C, which was chosen as a second sample of a 'hard' disciplinary programme. However, in contrast with Course B, which was about the basic theory of physics principles in the applied field, Course C was quite different in terms of its curriculum and aims. It went beyond the disciplinary knowledge and was designed to cultivate students' teamwork ability and to prepare students with 21st century skills for their careers after graduation (Binkley *et al.*, 2011). Specifically, Course C consisted of two modules: soft career skills (M1) and a team project (M2). In order to enrol in the soft career skills course, students had to enrol in the team project course (M2) as well; these two courses were closely connected and were co-requisite for each other. Course C was led by Bruce, the same lecturer as Course B. All students attended the same lectures and workshops together. The initial enrolment for Course C was 70 students, but a few students later withdrew from the course. Chinese international students constituted roughly 40% of the enrolment. In contrast to Courses A and B, Module 1 did not have tutorials. The lectures were complemented by 'workshops', which consisted of activities based on particular themes: creativity and teamwork. Students were allocated into groups by the lecturer and worked together on theme-related activities. There were five lectures and two workshops in Module 1. The five lectures' themes were writing a CV, extracting information, doing presentations, intellectual property and ethics. In Module 1, students were assessed through a final oral presentation as a team, delivering their actual design of a virtual product, with four essays related to the lectures' topics. Each essay focused on a specific lecture's topic and was an individual work.

Module 2 was designed as weekly lectures in the first semester, but placed demands on team members to distribute tasks, discuss, negotiate and work out their project together in the laboratory during the second semester. Thus, Module 2 was designed with lectures and collaborative laboratory work. The laboratory was the place where students could develop and test their project design together. Thus, it was compulsory for students to spend time working in the laboratory. Each team had to develop their own design for a robotic vehicle and make it run successfully. Since students were assessed as a group, all the students were allocated into 12 groups, with five to six people in each. Given that both Course C's modules were designed to develop teamwork skills, the students stayed in the

same teams across modules. In this way, the design of Course C had high demands on oracy as both process and product, because good communication and teamwork were vital for success in their projects and their final presentations.

Like Chapters 5 and 6, this chapter reports on the analysis of Course C's oracy demands and students' performance of these demands from the perspectives of the teacher and students. I will first explain the formal design, then offer an ethnographic description of the enacted practices in class, as well as in students' group work after class, and finally analyse both the teacher's and students' perspectives on the teaching and learning of this course. I got consent from each member of one group of students to observe their teamwork for both M1 and M2, and each also gave me their consent to interview them. Two students (here named Matthew and Neil) were interviewed at the end of the course: one was a Chinese international student and the other was a non-Chinese international student. Unfortunately, I was only able to observe the last lecture of Module 1 due to delays in negotiating access and gaining informed consent. For this reason, the lecturer, Bruce, was interviewed just once about this course after my observation of his lecture. This chapter investigates students' performance of the oracy demands as individuals taking part in groupwork.

Formal design

The formal design of Course C will be unpacked through an exploration of four aspects: curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and oracy demands. This analysis of formal design aims to understand the goals and design of the course and the teacher's expectations of oracy.

Curriculum

The aim of Module 1 was to prepare students with the skills demanded by their future careers in industry. Students were expected to: acquire skills for workplace communication and presentation, such as writing a CV and working as a team; be able to access and assess different information sources; and be capable of evaluating both ethical considerations and

intellectual property with respect to new products and projects. As a result, Module 1 covered important professional skills.

According to the course outline, Module 2 aimed to develop students' ability to work in teams as well as their project-planning skills in the context of the design and construction of a product that would meet specific requirements. This course required students to develop their team design and construct their project together in order to successfully perform the assigned tasks. Module 2 involved weekly lectures, and there was an expectation that the students would collaborate after class. It thus had high implied oracy demands as it required students to be able to work and communicate as a team.

The curriculum of Module 1 was weakly classified because the knowledge from the discipline had to engage with other disciplines' knowledge and considerations. The boundary between the specialised 'hard' disciplinary language and the daily language of workplace communication was purposefully blurred. The curriculum of M1 was weakly classified since it was not about learning 'hard' disciplinary knowledge. Rather, the aims of this module emphasised ethical considerations (drawing on philosophy), intellectual property (drawing on law) and workplace communication skills (drawing on linguistics and business). It was thus a multidisciplinary curriculum through which students could practice exchanging opinions, negotiating and developing complex ideas collaboratively. Bruce's design simulated authentic company tasks which called for specialised disciplinary language and knowledge to be used alongside these other languages and knowledge.

Module 2 expected its students to be able to apply the disciplinary knowledge to practical design, but most importantly, to do this as a team. It required students to apply techniques to exercise creativity in terms of developing individual and collective group ideas. On one level, students needed to have solid disciplinary knowledge, applying theory to practice in order to complete their team design. On another level, Module 2 foregrounded the oracy demands of teamwork communication by assigning a team project and expecting students to collaborate after class. This weakened the curriculum classification because the

teamwork oracy was required alongside the specialised disciplinary language; thus, the classification of both Module 1 and Module 2 was weaker than Course B.

Pedagogy

Module 1 was designed as five weekly lectures and two workshops. Each lecture or workshop lasted one hour. Each lecture was designed around a certain theme related to developing students' career skills. Two employers were invited by Bruce as guest speakers to offer workshops about creativity and teamwork. In contrast to the lectures, which were predominantly carried out as teacher monologues by the lecturer, the workshops were more activity-based, with employers asking students to join in activities related to their particular themes. Therefore, the pedagogy of Module 1 lectures could be considered to be strongly framed while its workshops were of a much weaker framing, encouraging student participation and dialogue.

Module 2 consisted of lectures outlining the knowledge and information that students needed to acquire in order to undertake their projects. Students were instructed on how to plan and manage projects to specifications. They had to learn how to design, test and complete their projects. Good communication was highlighted as the vehicle to make their teamwork productive with respect to negotiating tasks, recognising each team member's role, organising regular group meetings, exchanging ideas and co-operation on the same problem. Apart from students' individual work in applying the disciplinary knowledge, the group leader had to be capable of supporting his/her group members when they came for help. Support among group members was also needed according to my observations and the student interviews. It was the support among team members that created high oracy demands between students, emphasising effective communication in each group meeting or between individuals in the laboratory sessions. These laboratory sessions were flexibly arranged by the teams themselves. It could be understood that although the lectures in Module 2 were strongly framed with high demands on listening, the nature of Module 2 had high implicit oracy demands on speaking in students' spare time and the laboratory sessions.

Assessment

In Module 1, students were assessed based on a final oral presentation in their teams of five or six students, delivering their innovative ideas for a product, as well as on four essays related to the lecture topics. The essays and oral presentation were weighted equally, with each being worth 20% of the full score. These essays were designed as authentic workplace tasks, simulating those of employees in an industrial company. The four essays aimed to help students prepare a clear and successful presentation on their virtual products. It could be understood that Module 1 highly valued oral communication as the group presentations were assessed at the end of the course, with written work contributing towards a good presentation.

For Module 2, students were assessed based on their individual reports (20%), group reports (20%) and the final project, which was presented in the form of an oral group presentation (60%). The course then staged a competition between groups and their products, whereby groups competed during the final group presentation assessment, with the group that scored highest winning a token prize. The individual report was to evaluate their own role and work in their team, whereas the group report was a report about their task to which every group member contributed. These elements were then assembled to explain their project. At the end of the course, teams were assessed based on whether their projects could work.

Oracy demands

As was described earlier, both of Course C's modules created high oracy demands, particularly because speaking and listening are vital for effective teamwork. Both modules explicitly highlighted the oracy demands in their curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. Through their experiences in the simulated team tasks, students were expected to learn about communicating and negotiating effectively in teams. They had to be capable of explaining complex ideas and solving problems together. The oracy demands of Module 1's lectures were focused on active listening, while the workshop activities had high oracy demands in terms of speaking and listening. Meanwhile, Module 1 also demanded nuanced speaking and listening when the students collaborated in their teams after class. The

lecturer was not present for these discussions, but the group presentation was used to ensure that the students had experienced working in a group. Similarly, Module 2's lectures had high oracy demands in listening while the laboratory sessions additionally expected students to productively communicate within teams after class. It could be understood that the lectures of both Module 1 and Module 2 were strongly framed with the lecture's typical high demands of listening. The nature of Module 1 and Module 2 created the additional oracy demands of participating in teamwork. In conclusion, both modules explicitly addressed the importance of oracy in the workplace and arranged experiences of teamwork, underpinned by the assessment of the students' oral presentations.

The enacted classroom practices and teamwork

Given that all the lectures and workshops for Course C finished within the first half of the semester, I only managed to observe one lecture of Module 1 and missed the workshops for Module 1 and all the lectures of Module 2. The topic of the lecture I observed was ethics in the professional field of Course C's discipline. The lectures were carried out in a traditional lecture model and took place in a lecture hall that could hold a hundred students. Bruce delivered information about ethics to his students. As in the lectures I observed in Course B, the whole class sat quietly listening, with some students occasionally playing with their phones. However, instead of talking all the time, Bruce played a video in the middle of the class to show his students the vital role ethics could play in industrial markets. In contrast to Course B's lectures and tutorials, in which students sat in their language/ethnicity groups, the students in Module 1 seemed to be more randomly located.

As both modules of Course C required teamwork after class, I observed a group of students (here named Matthew, Neil, Olivia, Peter and Quentin) after gaining their informed consent. Module 1 and Module 2 made use of the same groups. The observed team consisted of five students: two domestic L1 students (Peter and Quentin), two Chinese international students (Neil and Olivia) and one Middle Eastern international student (Matthew).

From my observations, it could be seen that the Middle Eastern international student, Matthew, had adopted the role of group leader. They set a regular time for group meetings every two weeks for their Module 2 team project. During the group meetings, the two L1 students were very talkative, with the group leader Matthew giving advice. One of the Chinese international students, Olivia, actively gave her opinions and explained her work, whereas the other Chinese student, Neil, rarely joined the conversation. Sometimes he would nod his head if Matthew asked him something, but most of the time he was very quiet in the group. There were some interesting moments when Matthew asked Neil something and the other Chinese team member, Olivia, started to talk on his behalf. Although it was Neil who had been asked to respond, Olivia tended to take the speaking turn, acting like Neil's representative. Therefore, it was rare to see Neil say anything himself; he merely nodded his head while the other group members were talking. It seemed worth exploring why the female Chinese student Olivia spoke for him in group meetings. I will present Neil's accounts of his behaviour and analyse his behaviour in the section "Why Neil was quiet".

The assessment of group presentations happened in a classroom. Each group needed to give a brief introduction of their project and explain their design before they demonstrated their project. The team whose project operated fastest would score the highest grade. My observed team placed second in the competition.

Compared with Module 2, the group work in Module 1 required less time outside of class. I observed their presentation rehearsals after class. The group members had been allocated their respective tasks at the beginning of the semester, then they each started to work on preparing their part of the group report. It was not until the final oral presentation assessment that they met again to have rehearsals and discussions. That was also when they prepared and assembled their PowerPoint slides. The observed group of students seemed more at ease when preparing for Module 1's oral assessment, which required them to present on a virtual product, than they were during their fortnightly meetings to work on the real project for Module 2. However, it was not until the day before all the Module 1 groups were assessed that the observed group met and had their first rehearsal for their oral assessment. They held their rehearsal in a classroom in their school building. Each of

them took a seat casually to watch the speaker beside the podium on the stage. Each team member presented his/her own work, going up to the stage one by one, with L1 student Peter going first, then L1 student Quentin, the Chinese international student Olivia, the male group leader Matthew, and finally the male Chinese international student Neil. When each student was on stage, the other team members sat watching and giving feedback.

I observed that during the group discussion time, Neil sat farthest from the podium without saying a word throughout the whole rehearsal. In contrast to Neil, the other Chinese student, Olivia, actively gave feedback when other students were on the stage asking for advice. The group leader Matthew monitored the timing, making sure the presentation was within the required eight-minute limit. He was the most attentive person throughout the whole rehearsal and the only one who did not play with his phone. The observed group did another two rehearsals on the morning before the assessed presentation that afternoon.

During the first rehearsal on the Wednesday morning, I observed that after Neil had finished speaking, Olivia told Matthew to take a break before they started the second run-through because she needed to talk to Neil and to make some suggestions on his presentation. It was observed that student Neil came down to Olivia, who took his speech notes and started to make some modifications. They talked in Chinese in low voices, but most of the time, Olivia was rewriting something on Neil's notes. Meanwhile, it was observed that the group leader, Matthew, started to walk around the lecture hall, appearing to think, whereas the two L1 students were playing with their laptops and phones. After about five minutes, the whole group started the last run-through. It seemed that they were all satisfied this time, so once they had finished the second rehearsal, they left the classroom and headed to the place where they were about to have the final assessment.

The assessment took place in a hotel to simulate a real market competition. Each group chose a table to sit at. Three industry employers had been invited to act as judges. When each group finished their presentation, they had four minutes to answer the employers' questions. As was explained earlier, there were 12 groups, so the assessment schedule was

divided into two sessions with a break of half an hour. Each session had six groups present their work. The three judges revealed the final scores of each group once the whole assessment schedule was finished.

Similar to Course B, the enacted classroom practice in the observed M1 lecture was strongly framed as the lecturer, Bruce, gave input about the ethical issues that students might encounter in their careers. The whole class was dominated by Bruce and no student talk was invited. The lecture was thus a typical visible pedagogy (Bernstein, 2000) in which the regulative discourse established a high social order whereby the lecturer held the ground while students were required to listen attentively. In this visible pedagogy discourse, the strongly framed regulative discourse enabled an instructional discourse on the topic of ethics to be delivered in teacher monologue. In contrast to the lecture, the teamwork workshops were an invisible pedagogy in which students were to learn about teamwork through practice. The framing was weak, as each group member was encouraged to talk freely in order to contribute to the teamwork, despite Olivia sometimes speaking on behalf of Neil. To be specific, the regulative discourse of their group meetings or presentation rehearsals was weakly framed, as each group member had the control of their discussion, unless any of them were more comfortable being quiet.

Therefore, as well as the focused listening demanded in lecture pedagogy, Course C placed high oracy demands on students' talk as pedagogic progress in terms of group work. The observed lecture was thus strongly framed as a visible pedagogy, whereas the teamwork sessions were weakly framed as an invisible pedagogy.

Lecturer's account of Course C

According to Bruce, Course C required skills that went beyond the disciplinary knowledge. Considering the job market, Bruce argued that students needed to develop relevant workplace skills: "*On top of that, a degree in [subject matter] should include skills required for the job of [subject matter] that go beyond scientific knowledge.*" He further outlined

that these skills, like good communication and the ability to work as part of a team, are qualities that employers are looking for when recruiting graduates:

> *So we interacted with potential employers…and they said to us, 'We want students when they graduate, they are to be able to work in a team. We want them to be able to produce, you know, report something. We want them to understand some of the legal issues.' So all the stuff that doesn't come under your core scientific aspects are career skills.*

Course C was designed based on the rationale that going to university means more than just acquiring theoretical knowledge; students also have to be prepared for their future career paths in practical ways, such as being able to solve real problems in the context of the applied field. These skills need to be acquired so that students know how to do a presentation and be confident delivering their ideas: "*We want them to be able to present, you know, be comfortable presenting information, and all that stuff is extremely important when a graduate goes into an interview for a job*". This account aligns with the literature that highlights how important oracy is for the workplace and the need to prepare graduates with good oracy skills (Cameron, 2000a). In addition, it echoes MacLure's (1988) argument that oracy is not only an important skill in the process of learning, but it can also be an important product of education. Course C exemplifies this understanding, with the students being prepared to have good oral communication skills.

In order to equip students with the needed skills for their future career, Bruce created a simulated context for his students to experience in order to think about what they should do when working in a company. As he explained, it was through this simulation of a business environment that his lecture topics could be connected and integrated:

> *I took on this course recently, and it was very disjointed, so there was a lecture on intellectual property and there was a lecture on ethics. So it was all compartmentalised. My idea was trying to make it more continuous by having a simulation where at the start of the course I said to the students, 'Right, imagine you are a new employee of this company!' And I invented this company and each of these tasks and skills I tried to integrate into this fictitious role in the company.*

According to his account, Bruce created a simulated company context and cast students in imaginary roles to complete tasks. This amounts to a process of recontextualising (Bernstein, 2000, p. 56) workplace practices. According to Bruce's account, it was through this simulation of job tasks that he managed to connect the previously 'disjointed' lectures and also familiarize students with expectations in future potential workplace environments. The following extract from Bruce's interview explains how he prepared his students with essential soft career skills through simulation:

> *You are a new employee. There is a competition in the company to come up with the new product ideas in this area: come up with a new idea; write a report on it; look into the intellectual property; consider the ethical applications; get a team to discuss these things.*

With his pedagogic strategy, he sought to enable students to understand how these lecture themes were related to their future contexts and the importance of taking these issues into consideration when they design and produce a product for a company.

Lecturer's account of M1 workshops

Bruce invited employers from industry to lead workshops in creativity and teamwork. According to Bruce, students were divided into groups in the second workshop for an activity whose aim was to reach an agreement on a certain issue:

> *The second workshop was to do with teamwork. So they are in teams and they need to get on with each other. They need to be able to agree to come to conclusions, be diplomatic and be democratic to do that.*

In this extract, Bruce suggests that the second workshop aimed to encourage students to learn to respect each other and negotiate effectively when people were expressing different opinions. In the interview, Bruce outlined his expectations of how these oracy demands were to be performed. This indicates that the workshop designed by Bruce purposefully created high oracy demands, both in terms of listening and speaking. Specifically, each team member would need to participate, listen carefully to their teammates and be able to articulate their own ideas, as well as being capable of exchanging, discussing and negotiating ideas within the team. As Bruce mentioned, the discussion

needed to be ‘diplomatic’ and ‘democratic’, indicating that the classification and framing of the workshop was relatively weak because students had total control of their discussions and every team member had a right to express their ideas. It could be understood that the design of weak framing meant that control of topic, sequence and pace was to be shared equally (‘democratically’) among team members with the hope that in the end, the team would reach agreement after taking every member’s thoughts into account.

Also, in Bruce’s opinion, good communication is especially important when a team is made up of students from different cultural backgrounds. Course C had quite a lot of international students:

> *I set up a workshop where it actually had a main theme of cultural diversity. I was acknowledging the fact when you were in an international team, which if you were in a firm that almost always happens, because you have to understand communicating with your teammates, you have to appreciate how to work with cultural diversity.*

Bruce’s thinking indicates that the development of appropriate oracy skills is necessary not only for effective teamwork, but also to work in culturally diverse teams. This cultural diversity also requires students to establish a ‘democratic’ regulative discourse that can allow students to equally and freely express their ideas and thoughts so as to negotiate agreement productively.

The lecturer’s account of Course C and its enacted classroom practices aligned with the course design. Regardless of the listening demands of the lectures of Course C, there were also far more implicit oracy demands on students after class in order to achieve successful teamwork outcomes. The workshops of Module 1 demanded nuanced speaking, for students needed to have tactful and sensitive communication skills to negotiate with their members across different cultural backgrounds. In contrast with Courses A and B, Course C included an explicit oral assessment since part of the final mark was based on the students’ group presentations. This exemplifies MacLure's (1988) argument that oracy may not only be the desired product and curricular goal.

Students' account of oracy performance in teamwork

Two students from the observed group were interviewed. As was previously mentioned, the Chinese male student Neil (N) was observed to be much quieter than his fellow team members, which drew my interest. I interviewed him to talk about his experience and his thoughts about the teamwork. The other student I interviewed was the group leader, Matthew (M), since I observed that he was one of the most talkative students and an attentive listener who often gave valuable advice to the rest of the group. He organised the whole team by taking everyone's ideas, giving conclusive advice, and thinking about the possible examiners' questions (three examiners invited by Bruce from a company). He also collated all the group members' work into a coherent report and presentation.

The following extract from the interview with Matthew outlines how he organised the team:

> *R: How did you reach the agreement on the tasks for each of you?*
>
> *M: Initially, everyone picks their own idea, each of us pick up their own presentation. And after each one of us picked ideas, we have one or two weeks to decide on picking the best idea, or we can combine different ideas together to make a new product. So eventually, we decided to combine all of our ideas together. We made the new final product, which we pitched at the end of the year.*

This account fulfils with what Bruce said about the group needing to be 'diplomatic' and 'democratic' since each group member had the opportunity to contribute their ideas and it took them some time to come to an agreement on the best solution. Matthew's group came to an agreement by combining the group members' ideas. It was through oral negotiation that the students successfully came to this joint conclusion. The process of communication demanded thoughtful and tactful talking; students had to exchange ideas, give advice and negotiate differences to come to a shared position.

Group leader as the glue of the team

As the group leader, Matthew arranged the meetings and supported the other members. In his own words: *"I was like the glue of the team"*. According to his own description of his

performance in the teamwork for Module 2's team project, he played a crucial role and made a highly valuable contribution to the whole project:

> *R: So it was at the beginning of this semester that every one of you had reached the agreement?*
>
> *M: Yes, the second semester. Everyone knew their part. I finished my part earlier than others because I started very early. I researched it and then I helped everyone else and I told them every two weeks, "Let's have a meeting on Tuesday", for example. And we talked about the statistics. If anyone was stuck, we'd find out.*

Solid disciplinary knowledge was needed for Module 2 and good preparatory research had to be undertaken at the beginning. However, in those early weeks, according to Matthew, nobody knew what should be done or who should be the leader, so Matthew did the research on his own. According to his account, it was not until the female Chinese student, Olivia, asked him to take the leadership that the whole group started to treat Matthew as their leader, as he had a good level of knowledge compared with the others:

> *M: At the beginning of the year, no one knew what to do. We had to start researching privately. We didn't know what to do and who to pick, so we just kept quiet. But then Olivia told me like, "You are doing a lot of the work, I would like you to be the team leader", because she noticed what I had been doing and I was the most knowledgeable compared to the other teammates.*

As a result, Matthew started to not only work on his own task but also had to support his team members if they encountered any problems:

> *M: Because I was helping around, so I knew everyone's tasks. I had a very good idea of how every part works, every aspect. So I even did the presentation and they asked me questions. If there were any hard questions, I could answer them. My teammates went to ask and I answered.*

In this way, he understood and monitored how each part of their project was progressing. It can be inferred that, apart from the weekly group meeting, there were high oracy demands because of the sensitive interactive dialogue between the group leader and his teammates. It was through such oracy that the leader Matthew came to know what stage his teammates were at and how well the team as a whole was progressing. It can be seen here that a ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978) was getting assembled with Matthew being recognised as

the more knowledgeable peer. According to Matthew, the quality of the group communication can determine whether a team's project will succeed or fail:

> *M: Our demonstration was successful. Lots of other teams were not very lucky. Like I know my friend in the team design for the second year project, where I mean we did a lot of work last year. This year we were on different teams. This year you know his team …*
>
> *R: Failed?*
>
> *M: They had very bad communication. Because there were lots of mistakes, but no one checked on their team.*

Matthew further emphasised that effective communication could help a group solve problems and that it was essential that team members talked to each other so that everyone would have an idea of whether the project was on the right track. In his opinion, without communication, a team would fall behind, as problems could not be solved in time:

> *R: So do you think communication is important?*
>
> *M: Yeah. You need one or two people to communicate for the rest of the group, making sure things run smoothly. Otherwise, someone might fall behind and drag the group behind, which I've seen happen to a lot of other groups. Because they didn't communicate properly, their demonstrations not going so well, they had lots of problems towards the last week. Thankfully, our group didn't have any problems. Even our demonstration, thankfully.*

What Matthew highlighted accords with Bruce's account that the aim for both courses was to build students' communication skills and equip them to work in a team. Students had to be aware of the importance of communication in the workplace and able to talk appropriately and productively in terms of the process for their project. They had to negotiate, support each other and solve problems in good time, all of which required productive oracy. On top of this, the role of group leader was considered important by Matthew with respect to connecting and synthesising the allocated parts of the project. He/she has to make him/herself approachable to the rest of the team and to push the whole group to progress.

When asked about his teammate Neil, Matthew gave credit to his contribution, regardless of the fact that Neil rarely spoke during the group meetings:

> *M: I had no problem with Neil. If you give him something to do, he would do it well. Just I know that his English wasn't the best, so it's okay. But I know he understands what we talk about. I don't have a problem. But, um, yeah, I don't know, no problem really. 'Cause I know in the team design project, he did it very well.*

According to his account, Matthew was comfortable with Neil's quiet model of engagement during their group meetings because Neil would make sure his individual work was done well. In Matthew's opinion, Neil's English was not that good. His opinion suggests that Neil's English competence might be expected to affect his performance in terms of the oracy demands of group work. This suggestion was confirmed by Neil's own interview account, in which he raised the issue of language proficiency and the difficulty of interactive oral communication:

> *N: [Laughing] Actually, that day, he talked a bit much and I didn't hear them completely clearly. I was like that. Although I have been here for a long time, sometimes I still can't quite get what they mean. And everyone has his or her own accent. I think it's a bit odd. And our group has British students and they have accents to some degree. I don't understand. Maybe their English was too colloquial and I didn't understand what they meant. Maybe it's still because I know very few British people, so their daily spoken English, like some slang, I don't know, so I didn't understand what they were saying.*

This thoughtful explanation suggests that the main reason that Neil did not join in the discussion actively or give suggestions when his teammates asked him was because his English listening comprehension ability prevented him from understanding, and thus it was hard for him to respond during the group meetings. However, what needs to be pointed out here is that Neil's teammates failed to demonstrate any awareness of recognising Neil's struggles in listening. This might suggest that they took his silence for granted and did not recognise that their English could be challenging for an L2 student, especially when it comes to accent, colloquialisms and slang, as Neil mentioned. Compared with writing, speaking can be quite informal and there is more room for colloquialisms and slang. Based on Neil's

report, it seems that the L1 language speakers have yet to learn how to enhance oracy in diverse, multilingual groups.

Bruce had purposefully organised culturally mixed groups because he wanted his students to work across language differences and cultural diversity. Therefore, it is equally important to have L1 language speakers learn how to accommodate L2 students as teammates. More consciousness of English as a lingua franca (ELF) (Mauranen, 2011) could be beneficial in their conversations. To help L2 interlocutors participate, ELF is stripped of L1 idioms and asks L1 speakers to share some of the linguistic workload in making meanings accessible. Moreover, Matthew's accounts suggest that he did not see Neil as a problem, as Neil considered himself. In this sense, Neil's L1 teammates' oral performance could have been enhanced if they had considered the language differences in a culturally diverse group. They might not have realised the importance of considering their teammates' English competence, and they would have benefited from more awareness in order to adapt to the group's diversity, for example, by treating English as a lingua franca, rather than a given language that everyone had equal access. This linguistic issue was not uncommon; similar problems around language were reported in Courses A and B.

According to Matthew, although Neil was quiet in the group, he often talked to Matthew in private, for example in the laboratory sessions. Matthew had said earlier in his interview that other team members could come to him individually when they had issues and he would support them by looking into the problem and helping if possible. The following is Matthew's account of how Neil would prefer to talk one to one:

> *M: He listened. He also came to the lab a lot. I think he came to the lab more than Peter and Quentin [the two domestic L1 students]. He came to see what we were doing and what was going on. And if we needed help with something, I would tell him, "Okay, get these wires cut". So he helped me. He had a big test but he came to the lab to help a lot. He helped with a lot of things, though not big things, because he often came to see me and helped.*

From this extract, it can be seen that Neil was a supportive teammate who contributed less visible work in the lab outside of the group meetings. Although he did not talk much during group meetings, it did not mean he was not engaged in the team project. This account also aligns with Neil's own judgement of his own performance:

> *N: So usually they distributed the tasks and I did my task. That's it.*
>
> *N: Sometimes we had a meeting on Tuesday, but I went to the lab on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and I would ask Matthew if I had questions or was unsure about something. I usually asked Matthew in private, but not the other teammates.*

It is worth pointing out that one to one talk might work better for an L2 student like Neil to improve his oracy and to compensate for his quiet performance and silence in group discussions. Additionally, this one to one talk exactly elicits the process of mapping the ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978), as Neil could finally come to understand his question or solve his task on his own with the help of Matthew, who explained and taught through verbal language. It also indicates that it was during the laboratory time that practical problems might come up, giving rise to oral interactions and providing Neil with chances to interact with his teammate Matthew.

Matthew and Neil's accounts of their respective performances reflect that both modules of Course C placed high demands on talking within groups. The pedagogic design of a workplace simulation forced group members to engage in interactive communication while preparing their presentation or designing the team project. Even if some of the teammates were quiet, they might still have been highly engaged in one-to-one oral communication outside the group meeting. The teamwork exemplified a weakly framed invisible pedagogy as students were given control over how the process was to unfold.

Neil's choice to avoid speaking in the group setting and to engage in one-on-one interaction indicates that he did not try to develop the skills which Bruce hoped the simulation would nurture. It is notable that Neil's mode of engaging did not fulfil Bruce's design aims regarding teamwork. This is a risk of invisible pedagogy; Neil's performance suggests that sometimes students may not recognise what they are supposed to do in a team. Questions are raised with respect to Neil's performance: why was Neil quiet; why was he willing to

allow another student to speak for him? The following section will investigate these questions.

Why Neil was quiet

As has been explained above, although Neil often talked to Matthew outside the group discussions, his speaking opportunities were observed to be appropriated by his Chinese peer Olivia during the group discussion for Module 2. In addition, his draft script for his speech was changed by Olivia when he had finished presenting in the rehearsal for Module 1. Neil explained how he understood what was happening at those moments:

> *N: Because the idea of the outer layer was her idea. It was not mine, but she liked the [design] to have that outer layer and I was the person to make the outer layer, so you saw her speaking for me. It was her idea.*

By this account, Olivia spoke for Neil because the idea of the outer design came from her. However, in Bruce's 'democratic' view of group process, each group member should be able to talk freely about their ideas and work collaboratively. From this point of view, Neil should have been given the chance to talk about his work since it was he who made the physical outer layer, even if the idea was not initially his. Neil explained that what happened in the rehearsal for Module 1 strengthened the 'demanding' attitude of Olivia towards her Chinese peer Neil:

> *N: Oh. That was because she wrote a draft for me, you know. That draft was a bit long and she wanted to delete some. It was, you know, the draft was not written according to my ideas. And she said it was not so good. I was a bit confused and then I listened to her and reduced it. There was a time, I was stuck for a little while when I was doing the presentation because I hadn't prepared well. I wrote the notes the day before my presentation. So she thought I didn't work well. So she said to me, "I'll help you" and "you give me your draft and I'll revise it for you". In the end, the draft was changed to be completely different from my original one.*
>
> *R: So during the first two rehearsals, it was your own draft?*
>
> *N: No, no, no. It was already her draft. My draft was already revised before I started to do the rehearsal.*

According to Neil, it seems that his contribution was overwritten by his Chinese teammate, who forced her ideas on him. Neil acted as a passive receiver of ideas that came from Olivia and relinquished his freedom to speak his own ideas for the group presentation. Olivia's actions might be better understood through Neil's further explanation:

> *R: So can I say that you are more used to communicating with Chinese students?*
>
> *N: I think I'm okay with both. I think – I'm not criticising Chinese students when I say that Chinese students are still slightly different from non-Chinese students. For example, Olivia cares very much about her final scores. So she would care about every group member's performance, and the reason why she would like to help to revise my draft was because she didn't trust me, frankly speaking. She thought my draft was not good or something like that, but the reason why I didn't talk about this to Matthew and the others was because for them this was not a problem, because they wouldn't think it's an issue if you speak well or badly and even if you get stuck a bit, it's okay, and it's normal as a team, as long as we talked clearly about our product. I think there are some differences, because I can strongly sense this feeling that non-Chinese students are more at ease and not so worried about the final scores.*

Neil's interpretation of Olivia's actions suggests that she was concerned mostly with achieving high scores. By Neil's account, Olivia lacked trust in his ability to perform well. Instead of letting Neil deliver his speech as he wanted to in a supportive 'democratic' way, she took control of his contribution. It might be understood that she was worried that Neil would be unable to deliver a good speech and hence drag the whole group's score down. It was also interesting that Neil did not show much disagreement with or resistance to his Chinese peer's action. Based on my observations, he allowed his peer to reduce his possible contribution. However, this arrangement potentially broke the 'democratic' principle that Bruce had hoped every group would practice. Bruce's 'democratic' expectation suggests that his model of teaching and learning would be weakly framed, with control shared across group members. Unfortunately, Matthew and Neil's group failed to realise this ideal of weakly framed, 'democratic' group work in which each group member would have equal speaking rights to freely express their opinions and ideas. In other words, the enacted group practices suggest that there could still be a strong framing enacted in teamwork with respect to the oracy demands. This also suggests that in order to have a 'democratic'

relationship among group members, each member needs to have the awareness that everyone's voice in the group needs to be heard and they need to listen carefully when others are talking; otherwise, this weak framing could be broken if one student or some students hold the decision-making power most of the time. Apart from that, Bruce could have given a more explicit explanation in terms of what 'democratic' relationships among group members should be like and how students should approach that. For example, Bruce could have let students know that every team member had the equal right to deliver their opinions, ideas or suggestions and that each team member should listen carefully when any one of them is speaking. The group leader should also make sure that everyone has their say in the team meetings or discussions. If any one of them is silent or speaks little, the group leader should kindly ask them if there is anything they would like to add; it is unlikely that they will have nothing to say.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented an analysis of the design of Course C and its students' performance of the embedded oracy demands. In contrast to Courses A and B, Course C had an explicit design of staging high oracy demands as a curricular product in terms of undertaking and presenting teamwork with the oral performance being assessed. Course C was an example of a 'hard' discipline incorporating 'softer' communication skills to create a weakly classified interdisciplinary curriculum. Specifically, Course C was especially designed to equip students with essential workplace skills that complemented the 'hard' disciplinary knowledge of Course B. The two modules of Course C created a simulation of authentic workplace tasks with the purpose of preparing students for the workplaces that they hoped to enter after graduating. Course C drew on 'hard' disciplinary knowledge and its vertical knowledge structure, but this was incorporated into horizontal discourse through which students could switch between disciplinary language and workplace language practices with respect to professional product designs. The classification of the instructional discourse was thus weaker and less specialised compared to Course B. Communication skills and students' talk were explicitly addressed in the course outlines and assessment task. However, little direct or explicit assistance was offered to instruct what constitutes effective talk. Bruce did not teach explicitly how to negotiate ideas or how

to engage in successful teamwork, but rather left these aspects to be explored and experienced by students themselves through the invisible pedagogy of the workplace simulation.

Both the teacher's and students' accounts highlighted that good communication was understood to be vital for successful teamwork and the importance of a supportive team relationship. Appropriate oracy was not just a vehicle for learning, but also a curricular product that was staged and meant to be accomplished through the teamwork tasks. Without good communication, a team project would very likely fail. In order to have good communication, according to Bruce, students need to be aware of the cultural differences in an internationalised team. Furthermore, Bruce highlighted that good team communication requires a 'diplomatic' and 'democratic', relationship which means that a weakly framed regulative discourse of equal social order between students was encouraged in order to cultivate effective teamwork. However, this democratic set up clashed with the perception of Olivia's learning ambitions. Therefore, in the lectures, the lecturer needs to make this 'diplomatic' and 'democratic' group relationship explicit, explaining that students should appreciate everyone's work for the team because the value of teamwork is cooperation and thus each team member needs to respect the others' opinions, ideas and suggestions. In other words, teamwork is not about one's own ambition, but rather about producing work that is built by every team member with one common goal. In addition, according to Matthew's account, the team leader plays a key role in gluing the whole team together. He/she needs to have the ability to listen and give support, then coordinate the different contributions.

Nevertheless, while the framing was supposed to be weak in the teams to cultivate an equal, 'democratic' relationship through which each group member would have the right to contribute and argue ideas, the framing was observed to vary among certain team members, for example when one member took control of another's contribution. Unfortunately, in terms of being 'diplomatic' and 'democratic', Bruce did not make explicit how these conditions could be achieved. With regard to learning to work in culturally diverse teams, linguistic differences might also create challenges for L2 students' oral performance, and thus L2 students might choose to be silent in teams. However, the

approach of understanding English as the lingua franca suggests that the linguistic challenge is not just L2 students' problem. Working in a culturally and linguistically diverse group also requires L1 members to adapt their language to better suit their L2 peers. In this way, the choice of a Chinese international student to be silent, despite the curricular focus on oracy, could be understood to be the outcome of a variety of contributing factors. Last but not least, a Chinese international student could be quiet because of the linguistic issue or an inferior oracy position when his/her oracy demands clash with other team members' own ambitions regarding learning outcomes (for example, Olivia's ambition regarding her team's final scores) or when these factors are interwoven.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

This thesis in the sociology of education is a bilingual study investigating the oracy demands across courses in two disciplines in a British university to understand Chinese international students' classroom performance of such demands. This chapter offers a conclusion for this thesis by reviewing the research findings, its theoretical and methodological framework, and its contributions to HE pedagogy and to the understanding of students' performance, especially Chinese international students' performance in British HE with particular regard to their oracy demands. It will further conclude with reflections on the limitations of the research and recommendations for future research that could be explored.

Oracy in HE

This thesis was informed by the concept of oracy defined by Wilkinson (1965) as "the ability to use the oral skills of speaking and listening" (p. 13). Oracy is vital to the accomplishment of education as a vehicle for teaching and learning processes (MacLure, 1988; Catt and Eke, 1995) particularly in constructivist pedagogy, which is "one of the most influential philosophies in education in the twenty-first century" (Krahenbuhl, 2016, p. 97). Social constructivism understands knowledge to be constructed through an active meaning-making process between the teacher and students or between peers and has become the dominant theory informing pedagogy in UK higher education. Therefore, with more constructivist approaches to learning in university and more importance given to oral communication skills in the workplace (Cameron, 2000a), students' active interaction with peers and teachers is now highly valued in higher education practice (Doherty *et al.*, 2011; Engin, 2017). Oracy-based activities such as group discussions, teamwork and dialogues (Alexander, 2017) are encouraged in HE, and students' talk and listening skills are recognised as crucial aspects of university learning (Kettle and May, 2012).

However, constructivism only offers educators generic insight from the perspective of learning through social interaction without consideration of the particular disciplinary knowledge involved or in relation other cultural and social layers that students might have been used to. The nature of disciplinary knowledge and its influence in shaping higher education teaching has typically been overlooked (Neumann, 2001). Becher (1989) divides

disciplines into four categories – hard pure, hard applied, soft pure and soft applied – based on their "cultural and epistemological differences" (Lindblom-Ylanne *et al.*, 2006, p. 287). This division of disciplines suggests that a difference between the pedagogies of "hard" and "soft" disciplines could be expected (Becher, 1994; Neumann, 2001). According to Bernstein (2000), the "hard" disciplines typically reflect a hierarchical knowledge structure and the disciplinary knowledge tends to be quantitative and systematic (Neumann, Parry and Becher, 2002). In contrast, the "soft" disciplines typically reflect a horizontal knowledge structure and the disciplinary knowledge tends to be qualitative and holistic (Neumann, Parry and Becher, 2002). In higher education, the disciplinary context for pedagogy has been overlooked, and discipline-specific pedagogic practices are a relatively new focus. Given the gap regarding the influence of disciplines in shaping pedagogic practices that the prevailing pedagogy of constructivism has overlooked, this study has argued that oracy demands in higher education should be examined with consideration of the disciplines involved, but also with a deeper investigation of the discipline context in which students learn. Therefore, this thesis has explored the oracy demands through examples of a "hard applied" discipline and a "soft applied" discipline, then examined how Chinese international students performed the oracy demands of their specific disciplines.

UK HE has been increasingly internationalised with a steady increase (at least until the 2020 pandemic) in international student enrolments, among which Chinese students constitute the vast majority. There are debates in the existing literature around the understanding of Chinese international students' performance. Chinese international students are understood as either problematic and overly passive, or adaptable by different groups of scholars. Because of these arguments about Chinese international students' participation, this thesis has investigated to understand these students' experiences . Considering the literature gap on Chinese international students' classroom oral interactions with respect to specific disciplinary contexts, this thesis has aimed to provide insights and implications for improving pedagogic practices in British higher education.

Reviewing the research design

This thesis has employed a theoretical framework based on concepts of social constructivism, pedagogic discourse and knowledge structures. The methodological design involved ethnographically informed classroom observation and semi-structured interviews.

This study was built on the philosophy of critical realism (Bhaskar, 2012). Critical realism argues for the existence of an external reality independent of human interpretation within a layered understanding of reality which encompasses the "empirical" surface, the "actual" layer and the deep "real" of potential forces (Bhaskar, 2012). The empirical level for this study was the observable level of interactions between the lecturers/tutors and students. In other words, student talk and teacher talk manifested at the empirical level. It could be observed who was (or was not) talking, what was talked about, and what activities were organised. The "actual" level in this study was the "why" level, accessed through semi-structured interviews with staff and students about: the reasons behind any particular classroom interaction patterns; the reasons that Chinese international students chose to speak or be silent; and the expectations of the lecturers/tutors and students regarding classroom interaction. For example, it was reported by the Chinese international student interviewees that cultural scripts, language difficulty and lack of knowledge were all factors that prevented them from speaking in class. The deep "real" of potential forces is the level accessed through theory. In this case, theories of pedagogic discourse and knowledge structures were applied to understand and explain the potential forces shaping students' performance in class. With the lecturer's/tutor's or students' accounts providing data about the "actual" level and the observations providing the "empirical" level, I can enrich the theories used for explanation or develop a new conceptual understanding of the dynamics of classroom interactions.

Based on this critical realist ontology, this thesis drew on ethnographic epistemology. Ethnography as a way of knowing (Agar, 2006) is both a philosophy of research (Anderson-Levitt, 2006) and an epistemology (Green *et al.*, 2012). Because of its retroductive reasoning process (Kaplan, 1964), which involves direct, detailed and continued contact with participants over time, ethnography is ideally suited to the critical realist ontology. This retroductive process starts from the observation level (the "empirical" level of critical realism), to probe the "why" level (the "actual" level of critical realism) and finally enables researchers to generate a conceptualised theoretical understanding of the complex ontological forces (the deep "real" level of critical realism). This study also drew on ethnography of communication, which enabled me as researcher to observe what is typical

in the patterns of language and interaction in a particular social setting (Saville-Troike, 2003), as well as classroom ethnography (Watson-Gegeo, 1997), which adapts such methodology to understand classroom talk by focusing on the unfolding classroom interaction and its patterns.

In critical realism (Bhaskar, 2012), interviews are considered to be valuable tools to access what is invisible during empirical observation. Observation, as a research method for generating data, immerses the researcher in the particular context. This enabled me to systematically observe the "empirical" level in the contexts where the interactions took place (Mason, 1996). Additionally, interviews helped me access and understand the attitudes and values of the participants (Neumann, 2001). In this case, the attitudes of the academics and students were crucial for understanding the interaction processes observed. Stimulated recall interviews were adopted by this thesis in order to encourage the accuracy of memory accounts (Gass and Mackey, 2017). In this sense, premised on critical realist ontology, a combination of classroom observation and interviews offered a rigorous research design.

Since "hard" and "soft" disciplines can display sharp differences (Neumann, 2001) , this study chose three courses from two different disciplines' programmes to represent the hard and soft disciplines: one (Course A) in the "applied soft" social sciences, the other two (Courses B and C) in the "applied hard" sciences. The social science, Course A, consisted of weekly lectures for a class of over 200 students, among whom approximately 80% were Chinese international students, and small weekly tutorial groups of approximately 25 students each. The first applied hard science course, Course B, consisted of weekly lectures and tutorials for a class of 40 students, among whom approximately 40% were Chinese international students. Additionally, Course C was a compulsory course for Course B's discipline and consisted of two modules: career skills (M1) and team project (M2). Both modules were taken by the same students, who stayed in the same groups across modules. In contrast to Course B, which was about the disciplinary theoretical knowledge, Course C went beyond the disciplinary knowledge, focusing more on communication skills and group work to prepare students for their future careers.

I planned to observe classes for all three courses over a full semester, but because of the process of gaining ethical approval and negotiating access with the lecturers, classes for all three courses were observed for just over half of the semester. Both lecturers and a total of 12 students were interviewed. The lecturers were interviewed twice: in the middle and at the end of their observed courses. Seven students (six Chinese international students and one L1 student) from Course A were interviewed, whereas five students (four Chinese international students and one L1 student) from Course B were interviewed, and two students (one Chinese international student and one Middle Eastern international student) from Course C were interviewed at the ends of their respective courses.

The above section has reviewed the research design for this thesis. The following section will address the key findings in response to my research questions.

Key findings for my research questions

Research questions 1 and 2:

> **What are the oracy demands in British higher education?**
> **How do oracy demands differ across disciplines?**

This thesis has found that the specific disciplinary context can shape the pedagogic discourse with respect to its oracy demands to a significant extent; this was observed significantly in the tutorials. Although the lectures of Courses A, B and C were very similar in their high demand on listening, the tutorials of Courses A and B and Course C's workshop and teamwork sessions made different demands on student talk. Course A's tutorials spent half of their time on student group/pair discussion, with the rest of the class time allocated to teacher questions and student answers. The nature of the group/pair discussions contributed to a weakly classified instructional discourse where students were encouraged to construct knowledge together using more everyday language, sharing their own experiences to unpack the theoretical language and abstract concepts presented in the reading material to achieve more applied understandings. With this group/pair discussion activity, the classification of the curriculum was intentionally weakened by applying the theoretical knowledge taught in the lectures to real life contexts. Given that the nature of Course A's disciplinary knowledge was horizontally structured, students needed to be able to understand and compare alternative theories and be capable of arguing for and applying

the concepts most suitable for understanding an issue. Therefore, while the lectures of Course A involved inputs of theoretical language, the tutorials allowed students to blur this language with more everyday language so as to discuss ideas and construct arguments.

In contrast, Course B's tutorials were observed to consist first of a teacher monologue, then a ten-minute pair discussion on the set tutorial questions, and finally another teacher monologue during which solutions to the questions were worked out on the board. There were occasional teacher questions and student answers during the teaching. Compared with Course A's tutorials, Course B's tutorials' student group/pair discussions were much quieter. Apart from a few who chatted together, most Chinese pairs were silent, not engaging in the pair work. The biggest difference between Course B's tutorials and Course A's tutorials was the use of the mathematical language which mediates this discipline. During the pair/group discussion, students had to be able to apply the principles of physics and calculate results with mathematics. The rest of the tutorial time was devoted to a mathematical demonstration by Bruce, who did the solution on the board. Therefore, in contrast to the tutorials of Course A, in which students and the tutor, Stephanie, constructed knowledge together through everyday language, performing the knowledge of Course B relied heavily on mathematical language and physics theory. This contrast can also be explained by the nature of the knowledge structure. Course B's knowledge structure is a typical hierarchical knowledge structure (Bernstein, 2000). Therefore, the tutorial questions could only be answered through the appropriate application of the principles of physics and careful mathematical calculations.

However, Course C, as an integrated course for Course B's discipline, had a heavy emphasis on workplace communication and made very different oracy demands. For courses in applied hard disciplines that seek to prepare graduates to enter an industry that involves work in culturally diverse teams, strong oracy skills are demanded along with disciplinary knowledge. Course C highlights MacLure's (1988) argument that oracy is not only the interactive media for learning, but can also be the product and goal of education. Good oral communication skills like discussing, presenting and negotiating are widely recognised as key 21st century skills for both life and work. Therefore, although Course C was a weakly classified, multidisciplinary course for students in a hierarchically structured discipline, its emphasis foregrounded oracy practices that all students needed to master.

However, despite differences in the nature of the disciplinary knowledge of Courses A and B, there were similarities with respect to their pedagogic approaches. Both tutors purposefully designed their tutorials to include group/pair discussion, although Stephanie seemed to anticipate more dialogic interaction (Alexander, 2018) within the group, whereas Bruce expected peer teaching so that the "good" students could help the "less good" students to solve the tutorial questions. Both tutors believed that such interactions could improve learning and felt it was important for students to think, to discuss, to argue or to teach, rather than only passively listening to them teaching or doing the solution on board. It can be concluded that both Stephanie and Bruce highly valued social constructivist theories of teaching and learning, which highlighted the constructive process of knowledge creation through interaction.

It can be concluded that the oracy demands can vary substantially between the "soft" and "hard" disciplines, and between "pure" and "applied" disciplines. This finding also supports the argument that the nature of the disciplinary curriculum (that is, the instructional discourse) can shape the pedagogic practices (that is, the regulative discourse) and what counts as learning, a point raised by Neumann, Parry and Becher (2002). As a result, I argue that it is important to take disciplinary differences into consideration when we investigate students' classroom performances. However, even though a hard discipline may demand less student talk or less interactive talk, it may still incorporate a course foregrounding workplace communication, especially when this discipline has an applied career path that requires good teamwork, intercultural sensitivity and communication skills.

Research question 3

> **How do Chinese international students and L1 students experience and perform such oracy demands?**

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 offered descriptions of the classroom interactions in each course. Chinese international students were observed to be relatively quiet in terms of verbal participation in the tutorials of all three courses. In Course A, it was observed that it was always the L1 student group who first started discussing the task, then the Chinese international student groups began to talk later. During the group discussions, most Chinese international student groups spent most of their time browsing their laptop screens and ended their discussions quite quickly. According to the interviewed students'

accounts, their silence during the discussions, their reluctance to answer their tutor's questions and the time they spent looking at their computer screens resulted, on the surface level, from the linguistic challenges and a lack of adequate preparation before the tutorials. However, on a deeper level, they also spoke of underlying dispositions that reflected different cultural and educational scripts, such as the ancient Chinese learning philosophy of "wu" (Ma, 2007; Mo, 2020) which emphasises learning and exploring by the learner him/herself, rather than by asking many questions.

It is important to note that there were still three Chinese international students who were willing to answer Stephanie's questions voluntarily. This variability observed within the Chinese international students highlights the reconstruction of Chinese international students being adaptable. Although my findings are limited to a particular time in the students' journeys, they were capable of adapting to new circumstances as they came to understand the expectations. This is evident in the interview account given by a student who had had some teaching experience and was aware of the teacher's expectations, and thus often volunteered answers to Stephanie's questions.

In Course B's tutorials, some Chinese international students talked with their partners while others remained quiet. The L1 groups of students were always quite talkative, even though they may not have been talking only about the tutorial questions. In contrast to Course A, where three Chinese international students were happy to answer teacher questions in tutorials, in Course B, there were no Chinese international students who volunteered answers to teacher questions. Based on the interviewed students' accounts, they were silent in pair discussions because they either lacked the disciplinary knowledge to talk with their partner or because they were used to listening to the lecturer doing demonstrations, as they had done in their home country. Again, any adequate explanation needs to acknowledge both the surface factors and deeper dispositions. In terms of not asking questions in class, Chinese international student K explained that this was because she was afraid of asking "silly" questions in front of others. Chinese international student L reported that he did not even know what to ask because he did not understand at all what Bruce had just taught, and thus asking any question would make him look stupid in front of the class. To account for not answering Bruce's questions, the interviewed Chinese international students reported that it was either simply because they did not know the

answer or because they wanted to stay 'humble', both of which point to less visible dispositions that shaped their choices.

In Course C, the two Chinese international students in the observed group performed quite differently during their group meetings. The male Chinese international student, Neil, was quiet most of the time and allowed his Chinese peer, Olivia, to speak for him. In contrast, Olivia was an active participant in the group meetings. However, in private, Neil often talked to his group leader, Matthew, to ask questions or help with some work. Therefore, even though Neil seemed quiet in the group, he had his own way of interacting with his team members, such as talking to the group leader in private, and could therefore still be useful and supportive to the team. However, Neil did not learn or practice the workplace skills that Bruce hoped his students would. He did not fully take the opportunities to practice expressing his ideas, but rather gave away his speaking chances and thus, in this sense, he failed the benefit from Bruce's design of 'democratic' group work.

These three cases of Chinese international students' performances depict a relatively 'quiet' group of students behind which a nexus of strong cultural and educational scripts, linguistic challenges and knowledge conditions interweave. Although these "actual" factors could affect their expectations of the oracy demands and how they responded to their lecturers/tutors and classmates in terms of interaction, at the "deep" level, the nexus of cultural/educational scripts, linguistic differences and preparation produced a different model of the teacher and student, which influenced how Chinese international students responded to the oracy demands that their lecturers/tutors wanted. From this point of view, these Chinese international students had been used to pedagogy that offered few chances for student talk; therefore, when they encountered constructivist pedagogy in UK, they might have felt challenged by the regulative discourse's demands to be interactive in class. From this sense, the model of the teacher and student that was cultivated by their cultural and educational scripts may have often wrestled with the model of the teacher and learner informing the regulative discourse promoted under constructivism. However, the observation and interview data also suggest that it is not impossible for Chinese international students to shift from their home model of good teachers and learners to the constructivist model of interactive teachers and learners. Chinese international students

have the potential to be interactive in class and can adapt to a new pedagogic discourse which highlights interactions and especially values student talk.

Research question 4

What assistance is offered to Chinese international students to help them address such oracy demands?

All the lectures for Courses A, B and C were taught in the form of teacher monologues with a few teacher questions, either pseudo-questions (questions for which teachers already have an answer) or checking questions (for example, “Is everyone happy with that?”, “Any questions?”). All three of these courses used PowerPoint slides to assist and support student comprehension. Course A’s lectures were recorded and made available for students to listen to again in their own time. However, the lectures for these three courses offered few opportunities for student talk. Therefore, there was no pedagogic assistance offered to encourage students to talk. Rather, the class emphasised and presumed good listening skills. It was in the tutorials of both Courses A and B that tutors Stephanie and Bruce were observed to offer dialogic assistance to their students.

Stephanie, the Course A tutor, reported that she tried to join student group conversations and whenever she heard any good ideas, she let the students know that she would ask them to give their answers after the group discussions ended. This was one strategy she used to prepare students to offer answers in class. Apart from that, she tried to explicitly encourage students to speak in class. For example, in every tutorial, she reminded the class that “there is no right or wrong answer”. Stephanie tried to reduce the risk of participating, if viewed through those cultural scripts, and thus defuse the students’ possible concerns about oral participation. Also, Stephanie purposefully redesigned the preparatory questions for the set reading because students found the original questions time-consuming. This flexible teacher agency was supported by the course leader, who allowed tutor Stephanie to recontextualise the preparatory work for her own group’s discussions. Additionally, it was observed that Stephanie used scaffolding questions to help her students break a big issue down into smaller steps. Thus, her students could start to understand or critique simple points before going deeper. Apart from the above pedagogic

assistance, Stephanie was also skilful at using humour to relax the classroom atmosphere and thus break the silence, as students might burst into laughter and more of them might therefore volunteer their answers. Student talk was highly valued by Stephanie, as she believed that it was through interaction that she and her students could co-construct knowledge. Chinese international students were therefore expected to actively join in the group/pair discussion and answer her questions.

Bruce, the lecturer and tutor for Courses B and C, reported that he had never thought of giving Chinese international students any special support, as he did not see them differently from L1 students or other international students. He reported that he regarded the whole class as a class, although he was aware of the cultural differences. Therefore, the pedagogic assistance he offered Chinese international students was the same as what he offered to non-Chinese international or domestic students. He offered generic pedagogic assistance to all his students without distinguishing among groups of students. It was observed that during the pair/group discussion time in his tutorials, he came down from the podium to speak to every student to see if they had any questions or needed any help to solve the tutorial questions. This one-to-one support between the tutor and student allowed a process of exploring the ZPD. Students could better solve the tutorial questions with the scaffolding help of Bruce, the more knowledgeable knower, who offered timely support and hints. Like Stephanie, Bruce also liked to use some humour, making jokes in order to relax his students and to make the class less formal.

Because of practical limitations, I was unable to observe Course C's two workshops during Module 1. However, according to Bruce, he employed people from the industry and organised the students into groups to do activities related to creativity and teamwork. Similar to Course B, Bruce reported that there was no special assistance offered to the Chinese international students. However, he did purposefully mix groups, making sure that each group had both L1 students and Chinese international students. Given that both modules were designed to develop teamwork skills, the students stayed in the same teams across modules. With the invisible pedagogy of working in culturally diverse groups, Bruce was hoping to stage experiences in teamwork from which students would learn. Neil's report on his difficulty in understanding colloquialisms suggests that L1 students also need to develop their awareness that in a culturally and linguistically diverse team, it is not

exclusively L2 students' responsibility to have good English comprehension in both speaking and listening, but L1 students also need to be aware of their L2 peers' linguistic differences, especially when English serves as the lingua franca among people from different linguistic backgrounds. For example, it would be effective for group communication if L1 students were reminded by their lecturers that when they use any colloquialism, they should check whether their L2 peers understand, explain them briefly, or avoid such language altogether.

As was described in Chapter 7, Neil allowed Olivia to speak for him and revise his draft for their final presentation. This jeopardised Bruce's 'democratic' teamwork design and his pedagogic simulation of teamwork. Neil did not take chances to practise expressing his ideas and did not recognise the importance of his own opinions, but rather let another peer speak for him. Therefore, in this sense, Neil failed to learn from this experience how to work as a team member with respect to practising the oracy skills of discussing, contributing and negotiating. Although I was only able to observe Neil's group, their teamwork was still assessed as quite successful (they won second prize in the final presentation) regardless of Neil's silence in the team most of the time. The team leader, Matthew, was observed to have played an important role in distributing tasks, listening to all the ideas and bringing them together, making schedules and checking any mistakes in their project. While maintaining the democratic relationship between him and his teammates, including the quiet Neil, Matthew was successful in connecting all the team members and thus had their teamwork running well. Matthew provided a valuable model of what a good team leader should be like.

If there had been explicit teaching or visible pedagogy by Bruce on what the criteria of 'democratic' and 'diplomatic' mean and might look like within a group, Neil's group might have had an even better experience of collaboration. If Bruce had made his expectations of 'democratic' and 'diplomatic' clear, then students would have come to a shared understanding of 'democratic' teamwork and effective group negotiation and hence been better able to achieve the desired learning outcomes. For example, Bruce might have: made students aware that every team member should be encouraged to speak even if he/she seems quiet in team meetings; he could have recommended that teammates should listen carefully whenever someone in the group is speaking; and pointed out that one

person's ideas should not be spoken by another team member, for each person in the team should have equal speaking chances and be listened to with full respect. While explicit instruction could encourage and strengthen the types of interactions in groups, the effectiveness of this instructional approach needs to be further researched as this alone might not always guarantee better interactive outcomes.

This section has outlined the pedagogic assistance that the interviewed lecturers provided for their students. Stephanie had developed some particular strategies to enable her Chinese international students to better contribute and answer her questions in class, whereas Bruce did not use any strategies that were specifically aimed at encouraging Chinese international students to talk; rather, he assisted all students equally through individual consultations. However, both Stephanie and Bruce intended to achieve a friendly tone in their tutorials. They both worked to tailor their regulative discourse to be encouraging for students to join in the interactions. In contrast to Course B's tutorials, Course A's demanded more student talk. Unfortunately, the Chinese international students' silence undermined this design, as most of them were not actively interactive. It seemed that Chinese international students who came from a strongly framed pedagogy found it challenging to perform in a weakly framed pedagogy. Therefore, strategies employed by both tutors, such as using humour and coming down to have a dialogue with students within their student groups, offered pedagogic assistance to build up a friendly regulative discourse and a constructive instructional discourse. PowerPoints slides with recordings of the lectures and preparatory questions can also be considered supportive assistance that lecturers can use to help their students' learning. Teacher agency was seen to be important if it enables a teacher to allow a tutor to recontextualise his/her teaching based on students' responses to the pace and content of the class. Neil's performance suggests that Bruce could have made his expectations of effective teamwork explicit. This kind of teaching, as is recommended elsewhere in the literature (Engin, 2017; Heron and Webster, 2018), should be encouraged so lecturers do not assume their students know how to perform appropriately in class or in a team.

Implications for pedagogic practice

This section will consider the implications for pedagogic practice. The complex factors that reinforce each other to influence Chinese international students' modes of participation suggest that university lecturers/tutors need to know their students so that they can understand the multiple factors informing why they may perform in particular ways and proactively adjust their teaching to support their students. For the same reason, it is important to allow tutors to retain their own agency in teaching teams, and to be able to recontextualise the course materials, such as by adjusting preparatory work or tutorial tasks according to students' ability and dispositions. Face to face teaching allows teachers and students to know and respond to each other.

However, the challenging aspect here is that tutors may not always be aware of the deeper cultural and educational values that students may bring with them. What would Bruce's and Stephanie's pedagogies look like if they knew about 'wu'? Based on my findings, university teaching staff could expand their pedagogies if they had more opportunities to their international students' cultural and educational values. For example, the Chinese culturally educational value of "wu" (Ma and Shang, 2007; Mo, 2020) should be made well understood and emphasized in teacher education, so that lecturers/tutors may be ready or understand what might happen in the classroom, especially when they encounter silence, while trying to implement a more constructivist pedagogic approach. From this perspective, a more flexible and multi-approach to teaching may serve a wider range of students. It is important for tutors to prepare alternative pedagogical approaches or models of teacher-student interaction rather than limit to one model, in this case that of constructivism. Alternatively, more explicit instructions on encouraging student to talk may help international students transition more smoothly into the UK system. For example, because practicing 'wu' means taking time to reflect on the new knowledge, students can take time to 'wu' in their private studying time after class, but also be encouraged to share and talk about what they have 'wu-ed' so far when they come to the next tutorial.

A risk with the recent pandemic's move to online learning is that materials may become more pre-packaged and less responsive to student differences while the nature of student-student and student-teacher talk might also change depending on the mediums used for

communicating (e.g., online forums vs. Zoom seminars). The concern about "losing face" is a well-documented issue that all lecturers/tutors need to be aware of and cannot be changed overnight. Rather, if tutors want students to be more interactive, they can encourage students to engage in classroom interactions over time and make their expectations and reasons explicit. The value of 'losing face' may be now negotiated differently online which we can investigate and pay attention to the ways in which not only Chinese students, but also other groups of students pick up the online functionalities of engaging in classroom talk.

Although explicit teaching has been advocated by other authors (Engin, 2017; Heron and Webster, 2018), my study reminds us that all university lecturers/tutors can incorporate this into their practices, particularly with students from different backgrounds. For instance, in Course C's Module 2, Bruce could have provided more explicit guidance on how the groupwork should proceed to achieve a "democratic" relationship. Even the term 'democratic' could have been explained more to the students so they know what Bruce's expectations and educational values were.

Lastly, using humour was shown to be an effective strategy that can not only make the classroom atmosphere more relaxed, thus weakening the framing, but also may help break the silence among students. Perhaps, we should continue to investigate other strategies for weakening the framing in ways that break through the barriers of communicating and engaging in classroom talk.

Limitations and future projects

This section will present the limitations of this empirical study. It will also review and acknowledge the limitations of my research methods.

This research was qualitative in nature and was conducted with a small sample of courses based in one British university. A major limitation of this study was that there were no opportunities for the researcher to observe a larger sample of courses as examples of "hard" and "soft" disciplines. Given the time and resource limitations of a doctoral project, only

two courses were chosen to represent the “hard (applied)” and the “soft (applied)” disciplines, with a third course sampled as it was specifically designed to address career communication in that “hard” discipline. Also, because of the practical factors of gaining access and obtaining the informed consent of the many parties involved, the beginning of this study was delayed. I did not manage to observe the first few lectures and tutorials for all three courses so this study takes an ethnographic approach but a longer period of time would have allowed for more potentially important observations to be recorded, adding to the depth of my findings. However, being able to observe the remaining classes throughout the rest of the semester allowed me to gain rich insight into the typical nature of classroom interactions. Both Chinese international students and L1 students were invited to participate in interviews, but I was not able to interview every student in the observed tutorials. It would have been ideal if time and resources had allowed the investigation to be extended to more students, more courses, more disciplines and more universities. These are all potential directions for future research studies that want to build on the findings from the current study.

Future research in relation to oracy demands in Chinese higher education settings could be conducted to answer some of the questions that remain. For example, what kinds of interactions are expected by lecturers in Chinese universities and what are their understandings of teaching and learning? How do domestic Chinese university students in other university contexts value the construction of knowledge through interactive talk, such as group discussions, peer teaching and so on? Does this vary according to the curricular discipline? It would also be interesting to investigate how communication skills for the workplace are treated in Chinese HE contexts. To what extent do any “hard applied” disciplines incorporate such career skills courses? How do cultural scripts mentioned by my participants transfer back to the Chinese HE and workplace sector? These questions can inform the potential research questions for future projects to build on the outcomes of this study.

This thesis has argued that under the generic paradigm of constructivism that is now dominant in UK higher education, it is worth investigating pedagogic practices within specific disciplines. The performances of Chinese international students and other L2 students should be studied carefully in their particular disciplines, because each course and its pedagogy will be shaped by its own disciplinary curriculum and aims. Disciplines that by

the nature of their knowledge structure require more debate and argument are promising sites to investigate the importance of oral interaction. However, other disciplines with different knowledge structures are equally important sites to understand how their oracy demands can differ. Finally, what is legitimate to say and what constitutes productive talk in oracy-based tasks might be worth further investigation. Given the impact of Covid-19, most courses have moved online, so it would also be worth investigating online teaching and learning contexts, how interactions are managed online and what impact online teaching has on pedagogies such as group discussions and other forms of classroom interactions, with attention to disciplinary differences.

Contributions of this thesis

In light of the findings addressing the research questions above, I will discuss my contributions to the existing literature, to the understanding of Chinese international students and to theories of pedagogy.

Contribution to the literature

This thesis has identified a gap in the literature around disciplinary differences with respect to oracy demands in HE and the experiences of Chinese students in the UK. While acknowledging this study's limitations, this thesis suggests that while teaching and learning in the selected hard discipline in a British university was focused more on listening and calculation, the selected soft discipline was more reliant on staging productive student talk. As concluded in the key findings for research questions 1 and 2, the pedagogy of a soft discipline with a horizontal knowledge structure can be expected to be more verbally interactive and constructivist. The theoretical language may need to be broken down to more everyday language so students can construct and explore their theoretical knowledge using more common-sense knowledges, such as their own experiences or opinions. In contrast, the tutorials of a hard discipline with a vertical knowledge structure may demand less verbal processing, but can rely more on the laws of the disciplinary knowledge while mathematical language may accommodate the verbal ideas to a large extent. However, with the aim of preparing graduates to work and future career paths, hard applied disciplines may have to integrate workplace oral skills as curricular goals into courses, thus incorporating a very different pedagogic design.

Apart from identifying a gap regarding the oracy demands across disciplines, this thesis has also provided more understanding of Chinese international students' oral performance in higher education. Below is the section about my study's contribution to understanding Chinese international students' performance.

Contribution to understanding Chinese international students' perspectives

This study has found that Chinese international students' performances can be influenced by a complex interaction between linguistic factors, their prior knowledge and their expectations of oracy demands, which can be affected by the cultural and educational scripts they bring to their new British setting. In all three courses, there were students who reported that linguistic issues, both in listening and speaking, were challenging for their participation in the classroom interactions. Some students expressed little confidence about speaking in front of their peers in English and were afraid of being laughed at by their Chinese peers. However, constructivism, as the dominant pedagogy in higher education, does not account for this kind of interpersonal risks. Some students reported that they needed time to organise words and this preparation time for translating Chinese into English may have prevented them from grasping the chance to answer their teachers, as other L1 students were able to offer answers during this time (Chapter 5). From these students' point of view, silence may not necessarily equate with being passive (Wang, Moskal and Schweisfurth, 2020; Saville-Troike, 2003). Students who are silent may still be engaged and thinking hard. If they do not speak in group discussions or answer teacher questions, they might still be preparing answers in their minds, translating from Chinese into English. This is an important finding that argues against the "deficit" and "Othering" construction of Chinese international students. Being silent cannot be simply interpreted as being a passive learner and therefore it would be unfair to label Chinese international students as a "problem". What my study does show is that students come to the classroom with multi-layered experiences, models of teacher-student interaction, cultural and educational values that contribute to their silence.

Monologic lectures rely heavily on students' listening comprehension, but this can create another set of oracy demands that hinder students from responding when opportunities

arise. Students in Course A (Chapter 5) and Neil from Course C (Chapter 7) reported that sometimes they did not speak because they did not understand their L1 peers' or the tutor's English. Rather than seeing the L2 student as the problem, there is an opportunity to think about how all parties might contribute to more productive dialogues in internationalised education. For example, pedagogic strategies like explicit teaching, scaffolding questions, giving hints and models, joining in student discussions and offering encouraging words can all be helpful for lecturers/tutors to adopt. Meanwhile, students also need to come to a realisation that they are encouraged to talk in a constructive tutorial and are welcome to raise questions. Alternatively, at the beginning of a course, in tutorials, tutors can create a space where students discuss the oracy demands that they are used to and the ones that the course require them to engage with.

Another often overlooked factor that can prevent Chinese international students from talking or speaking in group discussions, answering teacher questions or raising questions, is that they feel they lacked sufficient knowledge. For example, students observed in tutorials of Course A did not join the group discussions actively, instead looking at their computer screens simply because they had not prepared the reading material before class (Chapter 5). Without reading the set materials and doing the preparatory tasks, they lacked the knowledge they were expected to have. The prior knowledge gained from the reading would have helped their further construction of knowledge in the group discussions. Additionally, one student in Course B (Chapter 6) stated that he simply did not understand what his teacher had said and therefore would avoid raising any questions because he felt he could not make sense of anything that had been taught that day. This lack of comprehension of disciplinary knowledge was particularly problematic given the nature of the course's knowledge structure, as Course B's knowledge was systematic and cumulative; students would only understand the new knowledge if they had built a firm foundation of the course knowledge step by step. The reluctance to speak from a position of ignorance could be a factor for any student, not just international students. However, there were additional cultural forces for the international student to overcome.

Another important contribution to understanding Chinese international students' oral participation in class was the invisible but powerful influence of their home cultural and educational scripts. The ancient Chinese learning belief of "wu", which was mentioned by

a student in Course A, emphasises the importance of self-learning. A teacher/mentor brings his/her students to the gate of knowledge, but it is the student him/herself who must complete the journey on their own steam. This learning belief emphasises students' self-learning, without encouraging them to ask questions of their teacher/mentor. In Bernsteinian terms, this builds a very different regulative discourse, with very different roles for teachers and students. This "wu" learning theory offers a significant point of difference in terms of reviewing the dominant social constructivist learning theory, which was reflected in both lecturers' interviews. I will address this contrast again in the following section, "Contributions to theories".

With this kind of cultural script in mind, it is less likely that students would be interactive in class. "Losing face" and "being humble" are other crucial considerations amongst peers that may deter Chinese international students from engaging in classroom interactions. The issue of losing face has already been discussed by Heron (2018) which also highlighted the possibility of Chinese international students being afraid of losing face and consequently not speaking in class. In addition, as was reported by my student interviewees, teaching in China is typically carried out in the form of teacher monologues without group discussions and not much encouragement of student talk. Students in both Course A and Course B mentioned this typical pedagogic culture and therefore, their expectations of high listening demands rather than high speaking demands in class. This kind of expectation helps explain why they were observed to be more silent than talkative in class.

Last but not least, it was observed that in Course A, there were still three Chinese international students who were willing to give Stephanie's answers. One of them reported that she had been a teacher before taking the master's course, so she knew that the tutor expected students to respond to her questions. Also, almost all the interviewed students reported that they knew interaction was good and their tutors expected verbal responses, but because of the linguistic differences, cultural and educational values or the condition of their knowledge, they hesitated from interacting with their tutors. Therefore, when a student was aware of his/her lecturer's/tutor's expectations and was willing to verbally participate, it would not necessarily be an issue for him/her to be interactive. This finding supports the literature (Doherty and Singh, 2007; Heng, 2018) that argues that Chinese international students are adaptable.

With the above understanding of the factors and considerations underpinning Chinese international students' performances, it can be concluded that Chinese international students may bring distinct cultural features and may also encounter linguistic challenges, but they can also be adaptable leaners if they understand their tutor's expectations and are explicitly encouraged to engage in classroom interactions.

Contributions to theories of HE pedagogy

This thesis has first made a contribution to debates reviewing the enactment of social constructivism. Social constructivism, as a dominant theory of pedagogy in Western higher education, advocates co-construction between the lecturer/tutor and students, which is accomplished through scaffolding interactions. Under this model, students are encouraged to ask questions and have group discussions or teacher-student dialogues. However, when this social constructivist theory of teaching and learning encounters the ancient Chinese philosophy "wu", the contrast brings new insights into whether social constructivism applies to all disciplines and to students from all different cultures. In contrast to social constructivism, which emphasises the interactive processes of teaching and learning, the concept of "wu" holds that learning is more about relying on reflection by oneself. As a result, Chinese international students may choose to be quieter, regardless of the linguistic challenge, the lack of preparatory work and other cultural/educational scripts. When Chinese international students enter the UK pedagogic culture, they are carrying their home teaching and learning beliefs in their minds and in their habits as students. Therefore, it is important to raise awareness that social constructivism may not apply or appeal to a group of students who are coming from different cultures, particularly for the first time. However, if a student has gained awareness over time that he/she is expected to speak in class and that interaction is important in terms of constructing knowledge in settings that are underpinned by social constructivist pedagogy, then he/she may actively engage over time. This transition was evident in the account of student F in Course A (Chapter 5).

According to the observations, social constructivist pedagogy was not practiced in the hard disciplines as much as in the soft disciplines, despite both lecturers' interest in fostering interactive classes. In Course B, Bruce's tutorials were observed to incorporate less interaction than Stephanie's tutorials in Course A. As was analysed in Chapter 6, the nature

of Course B's disciplinary knowledge was quantitative, systematic and cumulative. The knowledge was expressed and demonstrated mainly through mathematical language and in writing supported with talk, and therefore it did not demand much mutual interaction between the teacher and students to clarify or exemplify concepts. Apart from the ten-minute pair discussions in the tutorial, the rest of these sessions consisted of teacher monologue as Bruce worked out solutions to tutorial tasks on the board.

In contrast, Course A's tutorials were much more interactive. The first half of the tutorial time was spent on group discussions and the remaining half involved teacher questions and student answers. The nature of Course A's disciplinary knowledge was qualitative and horizontally structured with competing theories. According to Stephanie's account, the nature of the disciplinary knowledge required students to construct knowledge together to achieve a better understanding of the variety of theoretical approaches and apply relevant concepts to disciplinary issues. Therefore, social constructivist pedagogy fits this knowledge structure well.

Second, this thesis contributes to theory of pedagogy. Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse argues that regulative discourse is the dominant discourse within which the instructional discourse is embedded. However, my thesis suggests that the nature of the instructional discourse ("the what") can encourage and shape the regulative discourse as well ("the how"). For example, Course B's instructional discourse was more mathematical and systematic, and thus its regulative discourse tended to a more teacher-centred pedagogy to arrive at correct answers. By contrast, the disciplinary knowledge of Course A that was transmitted through the instructional discourse encouraged a regulative discourse that consisted of oral activities, such as group discussions and the continued dialogue of teacher questions and student answers to encourage students to take and defend a position. In other words, the regulative discourse which establishes the forms of oral interaction will be impacted and aligned with the nature of the curricular knowledge that is presented in the instructional discourse.

Third, it could be seen from the observations that tutorials are an opportunity to weaken the classification within a discipline. For example, both courses' tutorials were more weakly classified than their lectures. Course A's tutorials were weakly classified as the discussions

and examples offset its theoretical language with more everyday language of experiences and opinions. Course B's tutorials were not as weakly classified as Course A's because Course B's disciplinary knowledge relied on specialised mathematical language to express and manipulate ideas. In terms of the framing of teacher-student relationships, if it were weaker, then the regulative discourse could establish a less hierarchical social order, with students having more control of the tutorials, as in Course C's laboratory sessions. In contrast, if the framing of teacher-student relationships is strong, then the social order of regulative discourse remains hierarchical, as in the latter part of Course B's tutorials. It seemed that Chinese international students were comfortable in the strongly classified, strongly framed lectures, but inexperienced with the more weakly classified and weakly framed tutorials. British HE has retained these two very different pedagogies, with their very different oracy demands. This dual nature may be a strength of the system, offering different comfort zones for different students, but it needs to have supportive strategies for the listening demands of lectures, and the interactive speaking demands of the tutorials.

Researchers' reflection

As a bilingual researcher, now looking back, it was an important journey and being a fluent English speaker was no longer an impossible mission, but rather, as a new scholar, I have progressed far beyond these early concerns. After three years of hard work, I have come to an understanding that behind Chinese international students' verbal participation is a complex nexus where different forces, such as linguistic challenges, cultural and educational scripts, the knowledge condition and their expectations of teaching and learning flow together and interweave to impact on their performances. Applying theories of pedagogic discourse, classification, framing and underlying models of teaching and learning has allowed me to understand students' performances within the dynamic conditions of classroom teaching and learning, and also to contribute to the ongoing review of social constructivist pedagogy in higher education.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1 Plain language statement for lecturers and tutors

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Plain Language Statement – Lecturers and Tutors

PROJECT TITLE: The Participation of ESL Students in the Oracy Demands of British Higher Education

RESEARCHER: **Julian LIU (PhD student)** **Email: j.liu.5@research.gla.ac.uk**

SUPERVISORS: **Professor Catherine DOHERTY** **Email: catherine.doherty@glasgow.ac.uk**

Dr Jennifer FARRAR **Email: jennifer.farrar@glasgow.ac.uk**

You are invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

The purpose of this study is to understand the oracy (speaking and listening) requirements in British higher education and how ESL students, in particular Chinese international students, manage such classroom interactions. This research will provide insights into the classroom practices expected in different disciplines, and how to better support the language preparation of international students.

With the permission of your Head of School and your informed consent, I hope to observe and audio-record all lectures and one seminar group in your course across a full semester. My focus will be on the classroom discourse, that is, the nature of classroom interaction and classroom talk.

I also hope to interview you twice over this period (at the beginning and the end), and to interview some volunteer students. Each interview would take approximately 30-45 minutes. The interview questions will relate to the course design and your attitudes, belief and ideas behind your pedagogic practices. With your permission, the interviews will be audio-recorded for later transcription and analysis.

Confidentiality will be respected subject to legal constraints and professional guidelines.

You will not be asked any personal or sensitive questions. Your or your institution's names will be replaced by pseudonyms in my thesis or any publications. All data and interview recordings will be securely kept in a password protected drives. Any personal information will be destroyed on completion of the project. All data will be destroyed after 10 years' storage according to the requirements of the University of Glasgow.

This project is not funded by any external body. The project has been considered and approved by the College of Social Science Research Ethics Committee in the University of Glasgow. Should you wish to pursue any complaint, please contact **the College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer, Dr Muir Houston, email: Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk**

Please keep a copy of this for your information.

_____End of Participant Information Sheet_____

Appendix 2 Consent form for lecturer and tutor

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Consent Form – Lecturer/tutor

Title of Project: The Participation of ESL Students in the Oracy Demands of British Higher Education

Name of Researcher: JULIAN LIU

I confirm that I have read and understood the Plain Language Statement/Participant Information Sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

I consent / do not consent (delete as applicable) to interviews and classroom observation being audio-recorded.

I acknowledge that participants will be referred to by pseudonym.

I acknowledge that there will be no effect on my grades/employment arising from my participation or non-participation in this research.

- All names and other material likely to identify individuals will be anonymised.
- The material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times.
- The material may be used in future publications, both print and online.

I agree to take part in this research study ☐

I do not agree to take part in this research study ☐

Name of Participant ……

Date ……
Signature ……..

To arrange an interview time, I can be contacted via
email: …….

Name of Researcher …JULIAN LIU……
Signature ……..

Date ……

Appendix 3 Plain language statement for students

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Plain Language Statement – Students

PROJECT TITLE: The Participation of ESL Students in the Oracy Demands of British Higher Education

RESEARCHER: Julian LIU (PhD student) Email: j.liu.5@research.gla.ac.uk

SUPERVISORS: Professor Catherine DOHERTY Email: catherine.doherty@glasgow.ac.uk

Dr Jennifer FARRAR Email: jennifer.farrar@glasgow.ac.uk

You are invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

The purpose of this study is to understand the oracy (speaking and listening) requirements in British higher education and how ESL students, in particular Chinese international students, manage such classroom interactions. This research will provide insights into the classroom practices expected in different disciplines, and how to better support the language preparation of international students.

With the permission of your Head of School and your informed consent, I hope to observe and audio-record all lectures and one seminar group in your course across a full semester. My focus will be on the classroom discourse, that is, the nature of classroom interaction and classroom talk.

I also hope to interview you when the course finishes. The interview would take approximately 30-45 minutes. The interview questions will relate to the course design and your attitudes, belief and ideas about classroom interaction. With your permission, the interviews will be audio-recorded for later transcription and analysis.

Confidentiality will be respected subject to legal constraints and professional guidelines.

You will not be asked any personal or sensitive questions. Your or your institution's names will be replaced by pseudonyms in my thesis or any publications. All data and interview recordings will be securely kept in a password protected drives. Any personal information will be destroyed on completion of the project. All data will be destroyed after 10 years' storage according to the requirements of the University of Glasgow.

This project is not funded by any external body. The project has been considered and approved by the College of Social Science Research Ethics Committee in the University of Glasgow. Should you wish to pursue any complaint, please contact **the College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer, Dr Muir Houston, email: Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk**

Please keep a copy of this for your information.

_____End of Participant Information Sheet_____

Appendix 4 Consent form for students

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Consent Form – Student

Title of Project: The Participation of ESL Students in the Oracy Demands of British Higher Education

Name of Researcher: JULIAN LIU

I confirm that I have read and understood the Plain Language Statement/Participant Information Sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

I consent / do not consent (delete as applicable) to interviews and classroom observation being audio-recorded.

I acknowledge that participants will be referred to by pseudonym.

I acknowledge that there will be no effect on my grades/employment arising from my participation or non-participation in this research.

- All names and other material likely to identify individuals will be anonymised.
- The material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times.
- The material may be used in future publications, both print and online.

I am a native English speaker ☐

I am an ESL (English as Second Language) speaker ☐

I am Chinese ☐

I agree to take part in this research study ☐

I do not agree to take part in this research study ☐

Name of Participant ……

Date ……
Signature ……..

To arrange an interview time, I can be contacted via
email: …….

Name of Researcher …JULIAN LIU……

Signature …….. Date ……

Appendix 5 Course A outline

Course A is a core compulsory course for all Masters, postgraduate research and postgraduate taught Diploma students (except for those on some professional routes or postgraduate research students with equivalent previous preparation). It is designed to introduce students to the major theories informing contemporary research in the field of [Subject matter].

Course Aim:

To explore significant concepts, contemporary debates and discourses on theoretical issues that are important for students engaged in the study and practice of [subject matter], with a particular focus on theoretical approaches to [subject matter].

Intended learning outcomes:

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of key concepts and theoretical approaches in contemporary [] that inform the purposes, policies and practices of [];
- explain and critique major theories and concepts relevant to their field of [] and how these apply to their own professional contexts and questions;
- demonstrate a knowledge of the views of some modern philosophers and leading [] theorists whose work underpins contemporary understandings of [] theory and practice;
- discuss the effects of broader intellectual movements on [] thought and apply that discussion to their own professional contexts;
- develop a coherent argument through the selection and application of appropriate theories in [] thought to an issue in the field, drawing upon a range of concepts, arguments, academic literacies and ICT (information and communications technology) skills.

Appendix 6 Course B outline

1. Course Code:

xxxxx

2. Course Title:

[Course B]

3. Academic Session:

2019-20

4. Academic Level (see Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Levels):

Level 4 (SCQF level 10)

5. Credits:

20

6. Short Description of the Course:

This course introduces the operation and design of [subject matter], the nature of [subject matter] in various environments such as [subject matter] and [subject matter].

7. Requirements of Entry:

None

8. Co-requisites (courses that must be taken in the same session as this course as a condition of enrolment):

None

9. Excluded Courses:

None

10. Associated Programmes:

[subject matter] BEng xxxx
[subject matter] MEng xxxx
[subject matter] BEng xxxx
[subject matter] MEng xxxx
[subject matter] BEng xxxx
[subject matter] MEng xxxx

11. Available to visiting students:

Yes

12. Available to Erasmus students:

Yes

13. Typically offered:

Semester 2

14. Timetable (if known) and length and frequency of teaching sessions:

4 lectures per week

15. Course Aims:

The aims of this course are to:

- present the basic theory of the [subject matter] systems and the theory [subject matter] by [subject matter] and [subject matter];
- explain the of principles of operation of [subject matter];
- design and operation of moving [subject matter];
- describe the nature of [subject matter] the theory of [subject matter], and the basic mathematical tools and measurement techniques commonly used in[subject matter] analysis;
- introduce the propagation of [subject matter] through different media;
- describe how [subject matter] and perception is affected in [subject matter] describe the [subject matter] properties of such spaces, and how they can be characterised and measured;
- provide the student with opportunity to implement theoretical research learned in lectures combined with personal research in the design of a practical [subject matter] setup.

16. Intended Learning Outcomes of Course*:*

By the end of this course students will be able to:

- evaluate the operation of [subject matter];
- evaluate the operation of [subject matter]
- apply the concept of [subject matter] systems;

- apply the concept of [subject matter];

.

17. Learning and Teaching Methods:

Method	**Formal Contact Hours**	**Notional Learning Hours** (including formal contact hours)
Lecture	40.00	80.00
Seminar	0.00	0.00
Tutorial	6.00	12.00
Project Supervision	1.00	10.00
Demonstration	0.00	0.00
Practical Classes and Workshops	0.00	0.00
Supervised time in studio / Workshop	0.00	0.00
Fieldwork	0.00	0.00
External Visits	0.00	0.00
Work Based Learning	0.00	0.00
Guided Independent Study	Not Applicable	98.00
Placement	0.00	0.00
Year Abroad	0.00	0.00
TOTAL	**47.00**	**200.00**

18. Minimum Requirement for Award of Credits:

Students must attend the degree examination and submit at least 75% by weight of the other components of the course's summative assessment.

Note that these are minimum requirements: good students will achieve far higher participation/submission rates. Any student who misses an assessment or a significant number of classes because of illness or other good cause should report this by completing a MyCampus absence report.

19. Summative Assessment Methods:

Method	%
Written Exam	100.00%
Written Assignment, including Essay	0.00%
Report	0.00%
Dissertation	0.00%
Portfolio	0.00%
Project Output (Other than dissertation)	0.00%
Oral Assessment & Presentation	0.00%
Practical Skills Assessment	0.00%
Set Exercise	0.00%
TOTAL	**100.00**

20. Description of Summative Assessment:

Assessment
100% Examination

Reassessment
In accordance with the University's Code of Assessment reassessments are normally set for all courses which do not contribute to the honours classifications. For non honours courses, students are offered reassessment in all or any of the components of assessment if the satisfactory (threshold) grade for the overall course is not achieved at the first attempt. This is normally grade D3 for undergraduate students, and grade C3 for postgraduate students. Exceptionally it may not be possible to offer reassessment of some coursework items, in which case the mark achieved at the first attempt will be counted towards the final course grade. Any such exceptions are listed below in this box.

It is not possible to offer reassessment in group project work in this course. Students failing to complete the group project work, without good cause, will receive a Credit Refused (CR) grade and will be required to re-attend the course the following year.

21. Are reassessment opportunities normally available for all summative assessments in this course?:

No

Reassessments are normally available for all courses, except those which contribute to the Honours classification. For non Honours courses, students are offered reassessment in all or any of the components of assessment if the satisfactory (threshold) grade for the overall course is not achieved at the first attempt. This is normally grade D3 for undergraduate students and grade C3 for postgraduate students. Exceptionally it may not be possible to offer reassessment of some coursework items, in which case the mark achieved at the first attempt will be counted towards the final course grade. Any such exceptions for this course are described below.

22. Formative Assessment & Feedback:

None

23. Grading Basis (see University Calendar):

Schedule A

24. Examination Diet:

April/May

25. Total Exam Duration (Excluding in-class tests):

120 minutes

26. Short Title:

[subject matter]

27. Independent Work (i.e. the result for this course can be used to meet the generic Honours requirement to achieve a grade D3 or better in a piece of independent work worth at least 20 credits or the generic PGT requirement to achieve a D3 or better in a piece of independent work worth at least 60 credits – normally a Dissertation or Project):

No

28. Subject:

Select...

29. Location(s):

Main Campus

30. College:

College of xxx

31. Lead School/Institute:

Select...

32. Cost Centre:

Select...

33. Is this course collaborative with another institution?:

No

34. Teaching Institutions:

35. Taught wholly by distance learning:

No

36. Open Studies Credit Bearing:

No

37. Represents a work placement or period of study abroad:

No

41. Additional Relevant Information (if applicable):

42. Date of approval:	

Appendix 7 Course C -- Module 1 outline

1. Course Code:

xxxxx

2. Course Title:

Career/workplace Skills

3. Academic Session:

2019-20

4. Academic Level (see Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Levels):

Level 3 (SCQF level 9)

5. Credits:

10

6. Short Description of the Course:

This course covers important skills required for a career in [subject matter] including CV writing, teamwork, extraction and distillation of pertinent information from different sources, communication and presentation of ideas, creativity and innovation, evaluation of intellectual property requirements and ethical considerations and impact.

7. Requirements of Entry:

Mandatory Entry Requirements None Recommended Entry Requirements None

8. Co-requisites (courses that must be taken in the same session as this course as a condition of enrolment):

Team Design Project

9. Excluded Courses:

None

10. Associated Programmes:

BEng xxxx
MEng xxxx
MEng xxxx
BEng xxxx

11. Available to visiting students:

Yes

12. Available to Erasmus students:

Yes

13. Typically offered:

Full Year

14. Timetable (if known) and length and frequency of teaching sessions:

On average 1 lecture every 2 weeks with occasional workshops/tutorials/training sessions.

15. Course Aims:

The aim of this course is to develop keys skills for students with a prospective career in [subject matter], including presentation and communication skills, the ability to access and assess various information sources, and the ability to evaluate both intellectual property and ethical considerations for new ideas, products and projects. Other core skills such as CV writing and teamworking are also developed.

16. Intended Learning Outcomes of Course*:*

By the end of this course students will be able to:

- Search for, retrieve and evaluate the validity of information from various resources.
- Communicate complex ideas and deliver focussed presentations utilising appropriate language, style and citation of relevant sources.
- Apply techniques to enhance their creative input to the development of individual and collective group ideas.
- Produce concise and informative written documents that communicate core information at the appropriate level.
- Understand and illustrate the value, use and legal implications of Intellectual Property in [subject matter] and idea protection.
- Demonstrate understanding of the importance and implications of ethical considerations in [subject matter]disciplines and the individual's role and responsibility in this.

17. Learning and Teaching Methods:

Method	**Formal Contact Hours**	**Notional Learning Hours** (including formal contact hours)
Lecture	10.00	20.00
Seminar	0.00	0.00
Tutorial	0.00	0.00
Project Supervision	0.00	0.00
Demonstration	0.00	0.00
Workshop	30.00	60.00
Fieldwork	0.00	0.00
External Visits	0.00	0.00
Work Based Learning	0.00	0.00
Guided Independent Study	Not Applicable	20.00
Placement	0.00	0.00
Year Abroad	0.00	0.00
TOTAL	**40.00**	**100.00**

18. Minimum Requirement for Award of Credits:

Students must submit at least 60% by weight of the components of the course's summative assessment.

Students should attend at least 75% of the timetabled classes of the course.

Note that these are minimum requirements: good students will achieve far higher participation/submission rates. Any student who misses an assessment or a significant number of classes because of illness or other good cause should report this by completing a MyCampus absence report.

19. Summative Assessment Methods:

Method	%
Written Exam	0.00%
Written Assignment, including Essay	40.00%
Report	0.00%
Dissertation	0.00%
Portfolio	0.00%
Project Output (Other than dissertation)	20.00%
Oral Assessment & Presentation	40.00%
Practical Skills Assessment	0.00%
Set Exercise	0.00%
TOTAL	**100.00**

20. Description of Summative Assessment:

40% written
40% presentation
20% other

21. Are reassessment opportunities normally available for all summative assessments in this course?:

No

Reassessments are normally available for all courses, except those which contribute to the Honours classification. For non Honours courses, students are offered reassessment in all or any of the components of assessment if the satisfactory (threshold) grade for the overall course is not achieved at the first attempt. This is normally grade D3 for undergraduate students and grade C3 for postgraduate students. Exceptionally it may not be possible to offer reassessment of some coursework items, in which case the mark achieved at the first attempt will be counted towards the final course grade. Any such exceptions for this course are described below.

It is not practical to offer reassessment in the group project work in this course.

22. Formative Assessment & Feedback:

Formal summary of a loosely written article. Detailed feedback given and opportunity to resubmit.

23. Grading Basis (see University Calendar):

Schedule A

24. Examination Diet:

None

25. Total Exam Duration (Excluding in-class tests):

0 minutes

26. Short Title:

Career/workplace skills

27. Independent Work (i.e. the result for this course can be used to meet the generic Honours requirement to achieve a grade D3 or better in a piece of independent work worth at least 20 credits or the generic PGT requirement to achieve a D3 or better in a piece of independent work worth at least 60 credits – normally a Dissertation or Project):

No

28. Subject:

Select...

29. Location(s):

30. College:

College of xxx

31. Lead School/Institute:

Select...

32. Cost Centre:

Select...

33. Is this course collaborative with another institution?:

No

34. Teaching Institutions:

University of xxx

35. Taught wholly by distance learning:

No

36. Open Studies Credit Bearing:

No

37. Represents a work placement or period of study abroad:

No

41. Additional Relevant Information (if applicable):

Syllabus: *Lectures :* CV writing, Information Extraction, Delivering Presentations, Intellectual property, Ethics in [subject matter]. *Workshops :* Creativity, Teamworking

42. Date of approval:	26/02/2019

Appendix 8 Course C -- Module 2 outline

1. Course Code:

2. Course Title:

Team Design Project

3. Academic Session:

2019-20

4. Academic Level (see Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Levels):

Level 3 (SCQF level 9)

5. Credits:

10

6. Short Description of the Course:

In the Third Year Team Design Project the entire year is divided into teams which compete to design and construct [subject matter] which enable team [subject matter] to perform assigned tasks on time and within budget. The project which is highly competitive changes every year and has industrial sponsorship.

7. Requirements of Entry:

Mandatory Entry Requirements None Recommended Entry Requirements None

8. Co-requisites (courses that must be taken in the same session as this course as a condition of enrolment):

None.

9. Excluded Courses:

None.

10. Associated Programmes:

BEng xxxx
MEng xxxx
BEng xxxx
MEng xxxx
BEng xxxx
MEng xxxx
BEng xxxx
MEng xxxx
BEng xxxx
MEng xxxx

11. Available to visiting students:

Yes

12. Available to Erasmus students:

Select...

13. Typically offered:

Runs Throughout Semesters 1 and 2

14. Timetable (if known) and length and frequency of teaching sessions:

Weekly
Wednesday 12pm – 1pm

15. Course Aims:

The aims of this course are to develop team and project planning skills in the context of the design and construction of an [subject matter] system which must meet a given specification.

16. Intended Learning Outcomes of Course*:*

By the end of this course students will be able to:

- plan and manage a project to specifications, deadlines, and keep within practical project constraints (including an assigned budget);
- design, fabricate and test [subject matter] and systems to a specification (including the design, population and integration of [subject matter]);

- recognise the differing roles in a successful team, and their importance to team success;
- use [subject matter] techniques, including in the planning, monitoring and revision of project schedules;
- organise functional project meetings (including the keeping of minutes);
- separate a complete [subject matter] design into functional units which may be designed independently;
- keep a coherent laboratory day-book;
- use [subject matter] data books and application notes;
- select [subject matter] components for a specific task;
- organise clear oral and written presentations to describe personal and peer work;
- evaluate personal and peer contributions to a substantive project, in writing;
- apply creativity in the development of an innovative project feature.

Notes

A few lectures will be given near the start of the session. The class is divided into teams at the start of the first semester and thereafter. The course begins with a team building exercise. Teams are asked to select a team leader and the project work is divided amongst team members. Teams are expected to give short presentations on their progress at intervals throughout the course. Further details and a comprehensive timetable will be provided at the first briefing session. The course runs closely with Module 1 and both courses make use of the same teams. A formal project assessment will be made towards the end of the first semester and this will count for 20% of the overall marks. It is essential that all students make an early start to the practical aspects of the project.

17. Learning and Teaching Methods:

Method	**Formal Contact Hours**	**Notional Learning Hours** (including formal contact hours)
Lecture	5.00	10.00
Seminar	0.00	0.00
Tutorial	0.00	0.00
Laboratory sessions	20.00	60.00
Demonstration	0.00	0.00
Practical Classes and Workshops	0.00	0.00
Supervised time in studio / Workshop	0.00	0.00
Fieldwork	0.00	0.00
External Visits	0.00	0.00
Work Based Learning	0.00	0.00
Guided Independent Study	Not Applicable	30.00
Placement	0.00	0.00
Year Abroad	0.00	0.00
TOTAL	**25.00**	**100.00**

18. Minimum Requirement for Award of Credits:

Requirements for the award *o*f credits

To ensure that a student will be awarded the credits for a course, he or she must complete the course and reach a minimum level of attainment. This requires that a student:

- be present at lectures, laboratories and tutorials on at least 50% of occasions at which attendance is monitored,
- satisfactorily complete the assignments in the laboratories,
- attend compulsory lab sessions
- make practical contributions to design and construction aspects of the project

Note that these are minimum requirements: good students will achieve far higher participation rates. Any student who misses an assessment or a significant number of classes because of illness or other good cause should report this by completing a Websurf absence report.

19. Summative Assessment Methods:

Method	%
Written Exam	0.00%
Written Assignment, including Essay	0.00%
Report	40.00%
Dissertation	0.00%
Portfolio	0.00%
Project Output (Other than dissertation)	0.00%
Oral Assessment & Presentation	30.00%
Practical Skills Assessment	30.00%
Set Exercise	0.00%
TOTAL	**100.00**

20. Description of Summative Assessment:

Project work with staged milestones.

Components of assessment

%	Type	Details
20	Final demonstration	The extent to which the final product meets the specification.
20	Final team report	Joint report, with notes from individuals on their subsystem.
10	Final team presentation	Including demonstration of final product.
10	Innovative features	Features which add to the project.
20	Interim assessment	Assessment of progress during the first semester
20	Personal report	A report from individual team members describing the work they did in the project

Assessment is based on the overall performance of the group, with modifications for individual contributions

21. Are reassessment opportunities normally available for all summative assessments in this course?:

Yes

Reassessments are normally available for all courses, except those which contribute to the Honours classification. For non Honours courses, students are offered reassessment in all or any of the components of assessment if the satisfactory (threshold) grade for the overall course is not achieved at the first attempt. This is normally grade D3 for undergraduate students and grade C3 for postgraduate students. Exceptionally it may not be possible to offer reassessment of some coursework items, in which case the mark achieved at the first attempt will be counted towards the final course grade. Any such exceptions for this course are described below.

22. Formative Assessment & Feedback:

None.

23. Grading Basis (see University Calendar):

Schedule A

24. Examination Diet:

None

25. Total Exam Duration (Excluding in-class tests):

0 minutes

26. Short Title:

Team Design Project

27. Independent Work (i.e. the result for this course can be used to meet the generic Honours requirement to achieve a grade D3 or better in a piece of independent work worth at least 20 credits or the generic PGT requirement to achieve a D3 or better in a piece of independent work worth at least 60 credits – normally a Dissertation or Project):

No

28. Subject:

Select...

29. Location(s):

30. College:

College of xxx

31. Lead School/Institute:

Select...

32. Cost Centre:

Select...

33. Is this course collaborative with another institution?:

No

34. Teaching Institutions:

University of xxx

35. Taught wholly by distance learning:

No

36. Open Studies Credit Bearing:

No

37. Represents a work placement or period of study abroad:

No

41. Additional Relevant Information (if applicable):

Recommended books

Authors	Title, edition	Publisher	Year	ISBN	Cost	Code

Codes: A = compulsory; B = strongly recommended; C = recommended; D = wider reading

42. Date of approval:	

Appendix 9 Interview themes for lecturers/tutors and students

1st interview themes:

1. Course structure/lesson content
    a. Tell me about the course and it is structured?

2. Classroom activities
    a. Tell me about the way you plan your lecture?
    b. Do you think interaction(classroom/group discussion) is important for this course/ Can classroom interaction (eg. Group discussion) help to develop disciplinary knowledge?
    c. If interaction is important, how does interaction help to achieve your course aim? And how often ? The average time length for group discussion in one period of class?
3. Challenges and strategies
    a. Have you ever encountered any challenges in terms of engaging students' (oral) participation?
    b. How do you encourage students' classroom participation?
4. Performance of ESL students and English as first language students
    a. How do you see ESL students' performance in classroom?
    b. How do you see English as first language students' performance in classroom?

2nd interview themes:

1. Self-evaluation
    a. How do you feel about the class thus far?
    b. How do you feel about your students' oral participation?
    c. Any differences on the performance between ESL students and English as first language students?
    d. What is typical in this class?
2. Stimulated recall
    a. What was your purpose at that moment by asking this question?

3. Teaching shifts

a. How does the content shape what you do?
b. How do you see your relationship with your students in the classroom setting? Does it change according to the time of the teaching/particular stages of classroom interaction?

Interview themes for ESL students:

1. British teaching VS home teaching
    a. Are there any pedagogic/teaching differences between here and your home country?
2. Classroom interaction
    a. What is your opinion on classroom interaction, for example, teacher-student' interaction, group discussion and presentation?
    b. When/under what situation did you feel that you wanted to talk? Are there any circumstances in which you felt not wanting to talk or had to remain silent?
    c. Why did you keep silent during that time? (exclusive for students who were evident that they did not talk much during the discussion)
    d. Do you think classroom/group discussion help in terms of understanding or constructing knowledge? Why and why not
3. Self-evaluation
    a. Do you see your classroom participation different from other English as 1st language students?
    b. Are you used to the teaching now? If so, how long it took you to get used to the pedagogy here? And how did you overcome the challenges brought by pedagogic differences between the British education and the education in your home country?
4. Teacher-student relationship
    a. How do you see your relationship with your lecturer/tutor?
5. Class feedback
    a. If you are given a chance, what suggestions you would like to make to your lecturer/tutor?

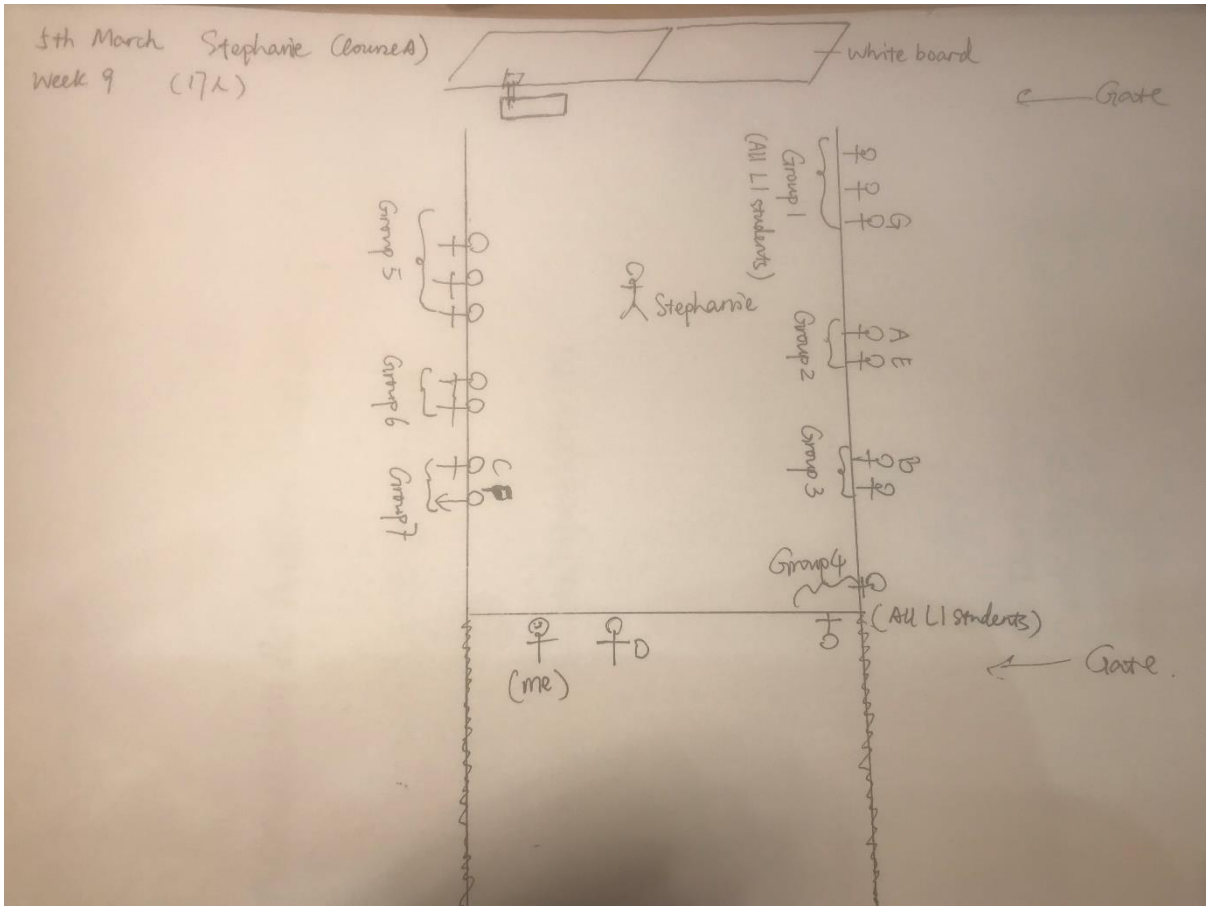
Interview themes for 1st language speakers:

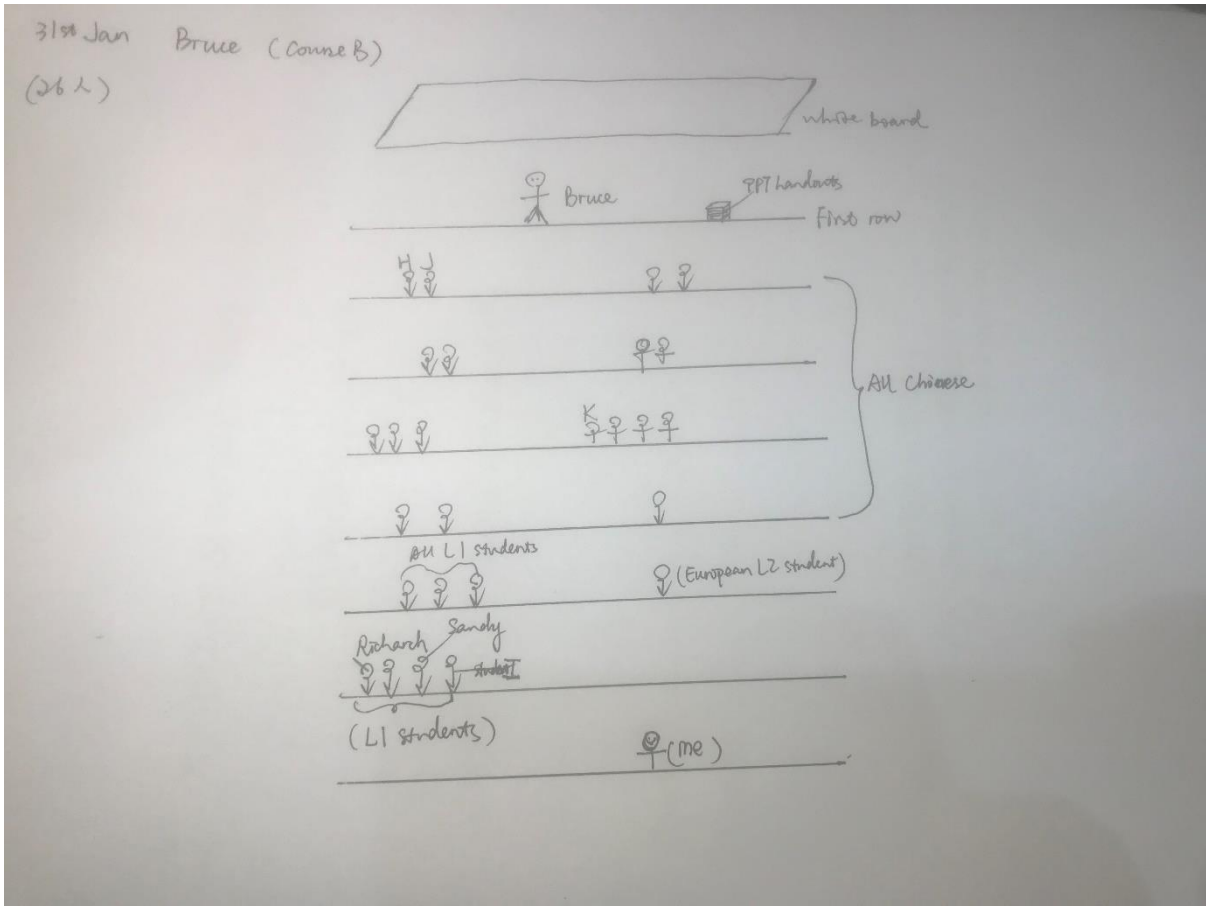
1. Classroom interaction
    a. What is your opinion on classroom interaction, for example, teacher-student' interaction, group discussion and presentation?

b. When/under what situation did you feel that you wanted to talk? Are there any circumstances in which you felt not wanting to talk or had to remain silent?
c. Do you think classroom/group discussion help in terms of understanding or constructing knowledge? Why and why not

2. Self-evaluation
    a. Do you see yourself different from other ESL students in terms of classroom participation?
3. Teacher-student relationship
    a. How do you see your relationship with your lecturer/tutor?
4. Class feedback
    a. If you are given a chance, what suggestions you would like to make to your lecturer/tutor?

Appendix 10 Pictures




31st Jan Bruce (Course B)
(26人)
white board
Bruce
PPT handouts
First row
All Chinese
All L1 students
(European L2 student)
Richard
Sandy
(L1 students)
(me)

Appendix 11 Extract of a sampled transcript

R: is it your first time studying in an English speaking country?

A: yes.

R: did you attend pre-sessional course or pre-master?

A: no

R: can you talk about how do you think about this course?

A: I feel this course is a bit like, I did my undergraduate in education as well. I feel this course is like what we had the course of the history of foreign education. The difference is that course started to introduce the history of western education since the ancient time. The characters in this course are all from the modern age. And each lecture was talking about different person's theory. And it's a bit abstract.

R: so is the content hard?

A: it is a bit

R: can you also talk about how do you feel about the lectures and the tutorials?

A: every lecture is different and different lecturers talk differently and they all introduced the theory of a particular modern educationist. It's a bit like introduction. So then the tutorial will have further discussion, but it still I feel the discussion was not that in depth.

R: how to say that?

A: the tutorial only targeted at the one particular article that was required by the lecturer. And talked about the content of the article, which is a bit like reading comprehension task that the tutor left a few questions in terms of the article and then we went back home reading and gave feedback afterwards during the discussion in class. That's it.

R: so you feel the discussion was not in-depth is because it only covered a few points of the article?

A: it focused on the content of the article itself and you may know little about the author's ideas or research, and then you were required to answer teacher's questions, whereas the lectures would give you more information about an educationist's opinions. So the lecture is at a macro level compared with the tutorial is at the micro level.

R: are you used to these tutorials, the way the tutor teaches?

A: I think I'm fine. But my English is not so good so sometimes when I wanted to say something I didn't know how to say.

R: then I guess during the pairs discussion, you spoked in Chinese more than in English?

A: yes

R: so is it helpful to discuss with your partner or within 3?

A: it is helpful. If you had done the reading at home and thought about the answer, then you would be able to exchange your ideas in tutorials and found out whether you understood it correctly or not. This is actually the English reading comprehension, but sometimes you may find that you didn't understand it correctly. So it is good that we could exchange our answers and explored the content. But if we hadn't had prepared it well, then we could only chat randomly. Then it wouldn't be helpful. So the point is whether you have read the article carefully.

R: then how did you know you didn't understand something correctly?

A: because if both of us weren't sure of something we would look around and ask the people besides. If we had completely different answers then perhaps what I understood was wrong.

R: and sometimes I saw students finished the discussion very fast or spent most of the time looking at their laptop screen. Can you tell me why that happened?

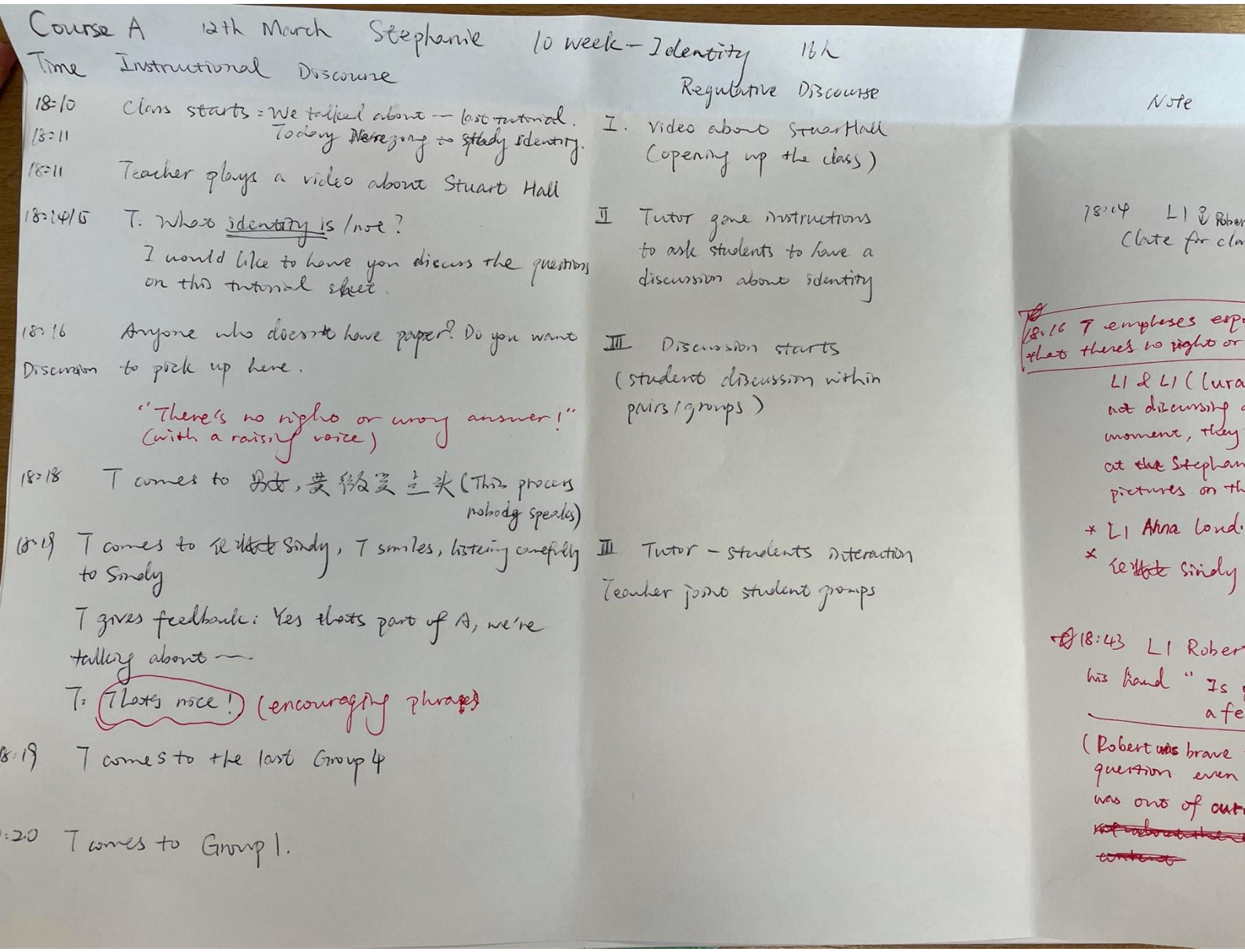
A: because they didn't read it carefully. Many people, and sometimes me as well, didn't read it well at home. So during the discussion time in tutorial, we had to browse it quickly in class in order to find the answers. But I feel our tutor is very good as she always labelled the paragraphs that contain the answers. So we could just go for that paragraph.

R: so if you have had read the article and thought about the answer, why didn't you answer Fiona when she asked the same questions on the handout?

A: I wasn't able to answer the question even if I knew the answer, because my vocabulary is not big. So I knew what to say but I didn't know how to say it. So for example, if want to answer a question in class, I need some time to prepare the answer like checking the dictionary so that I could speak up, otherwise I would only imagine.

…..

Appendix 12 Classroom proforma



Course A 12th March Stephanie 10 week – Identity 16人

Time	Instructional Discourse	Regulative Discourse	Note
18:10	Class starts: We talked about — last tutorial. Today ~~We're going to~~ study identity.	I. Video about Stuart Hall (Opening up the class)	
18:11	Teacher plays a video about Stuart Hall		
18:14/15	T. Who's identity is / not? I would like to have you discuss the questions on this tutorial sheet.	II Tutor gave instructions to ask students to have a discussion about identity	18:14 L1 & Rober Chate for cla
18:16 Discussion	Anyone who doesn't have paper? Do you want to pick up here. "There's no right or wrong answer!" (with a raising voice)	III Discussion starts (students discussion within pairs/groups)	18:16 T empleses esp that there's no right or L1 & L1 (Lura not discussing moment, they at the Stephan pictures on th * L1 Anna loud * ~~to~~ Sindy
18:18	T comes to 马女, 觉得没意思 (This process nobody speaks)		
18:19	T comes to ~~to~~ Sindy, T smiles, listening carefully to Sindy T gives feedback: Yes that's part of A, we're talking about —. T: That's nice! (encouraging phrases)	III Tutor – students interaction Teacher joins student groups	18:43 L1 Rober his hand " Is a fe (Robert was brave question even was one of ~~not~~ ~~confused~~
18:19	T comes to the last Group 4		
18:20	T comes to Group 1.		

Appendix 13 Transcribed tutorial in the format of classroom proforma

2.14th B Thursday ~~lecture~~ Tutorial Pi. jokes on exam
Course B 在3时17日的tutorial/lecture中也记习得这些.

time		Instructional discourse	Regulative discourse	notes
12:05 2'13"	T: Right. Why we don't make a start everyone. So as I said last time, we do tutorial today. So tutorial sheet, section one and two, first tutorial sheet, I went over question one and also question 2 the last [summer?/time] I did this. Why don't we spent a little time, who do some of the questions in here and then I'll go around to get one and then I'll go and answer on the board. So why don't just now, if you haven't already, have a go on question 3, yeah? So question 3 and 4, we'll be doing today. Does anyone to start got any questions about the questions? Anyone trying them stuck? Questions 3 previous use, I have ran the tutorial, it's a bit controversial, some people not agree with the answers from the text book. I have a solution that agrees with the text book. So see, you on the back, anyone	Teacher opening up the class, Giving instructions on what they are going to do: solving tutorial question 3 & 4	Why 音调拖长, 非常长 Teacher monologue	
3'20"	tried that? any specific problems? S: I have [...] T: did you manage? S: Yeah T: did you? S: like a couple, I finished the first part, T: yes S: a couple, [] up T: Oh yeyeye S: ye T: that's fine. That's no problem. Ok! So if you haven't tried, if you have tried them, eh, I don't know, sitting there nice thought or if you have any questions let me know. I'll come around and see how you getting on. Make		Teacher (eliciting) question Short Teacher-Student interaction Teacher question Student response	Malaysian girl responded
3'49"	sure you do, try question 3 just now, the question 4, ok?		Malaysian girl saying ye as well	
Self-working	Students chat a bit in pairs. Voice mostly from the white-malaysian girls And Andrew group		pair/group work	Andy responded